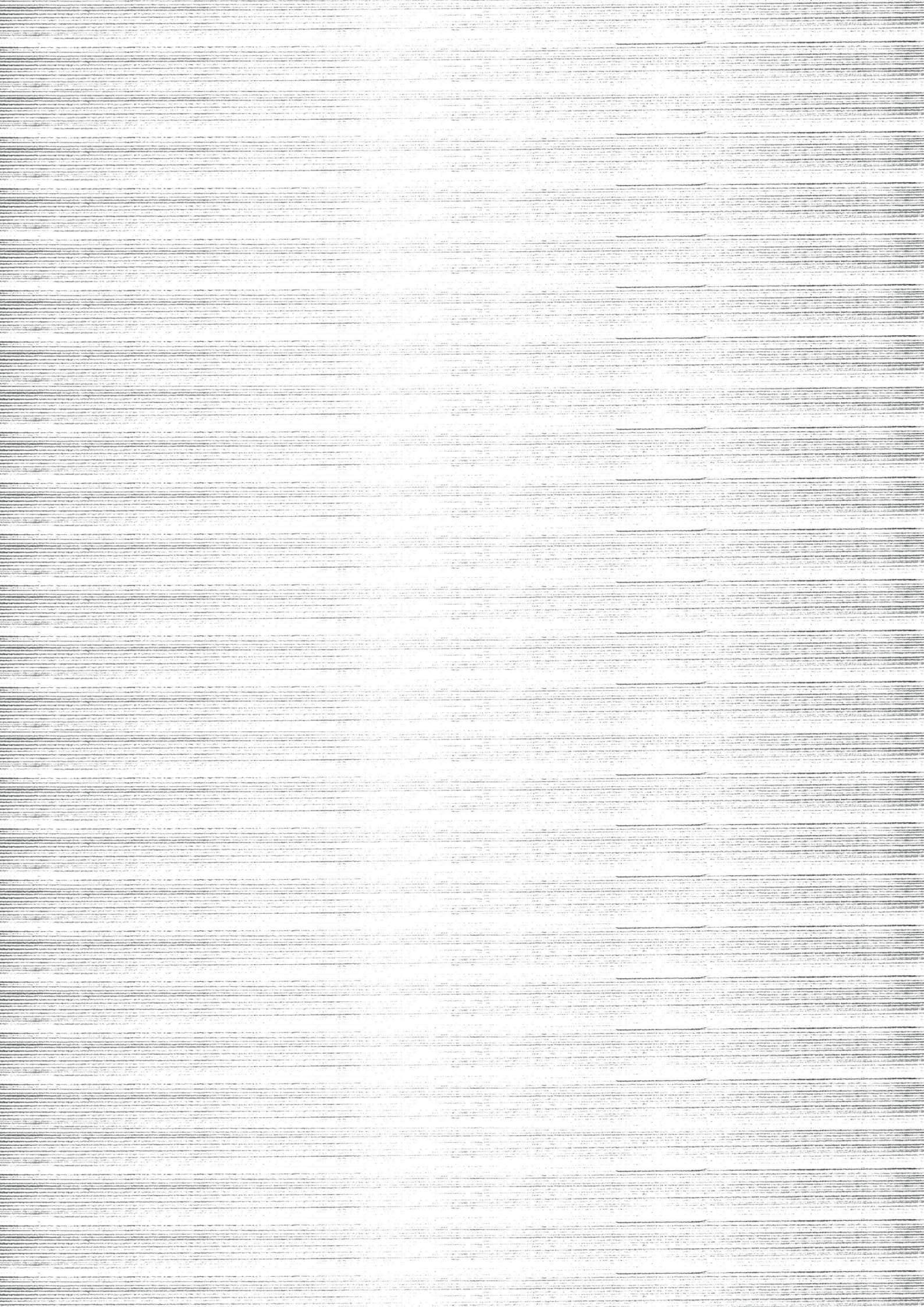

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an intervention for enhancing
the tourism in the alpine region

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TABLE OF CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 1

ABSTRACT 2

INTRODUCTION 6

1.1 Objective 6

1.2 Background 6

1.3 Significance and context 8

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 12

2.1 Architectural interventions 12

2.1.1 The origin of panoramic views 12
2.1.2 Lookout towers - from traditional to free forms 15
2.1.3 The role of a new leisure society 16
2.1.4 Change in meaning 16

2.2 Different approaches and types of architectural interventions 19

2.2.1 Amusement 19
2.2.2 Thrill 20
2.2.3 Vertigo 21
2.2.4 Momentous 21

2.3 The situation and impact of tourism in the alpine area 28

2.3.1 Leisure and discovery activities 28
2.3.2 Geographical structure 30
2.3.3 General societal trends 30
2.3.4 Climate changes leading to adaption needs of alpine tourism 30
2.3.5 The challenges regarding driving forces 31

TABLE OF CONTENT

CASE STUDY 34

3.1 Ramsau am Dachstein 36

3.1.1 Architectural intervention in 2700 m height 41
3.1.2 Sustainable tourism 49

3.2 Method of data collection 43

3.3 Observational and visual research 43

3.4 Interviews 46

3.4.1 Expert interviews 46
3.4.2 Tourist Interviews 50

3.5 Main findings of the study 51

SOLUTION PROPOSAL 57

4.1 Objective 57

4.2 Concept 61

4.2.1 The intervention 61
4.2.2 Sculptural philosophy 61
4.2.3 Natural landscape 68
4.2.4 Material choice 72
4.2.5 Lighting proposal 74

4.3 Design visualization & technical drawings 76

4.4 Expectations and conclusion 84

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION 89

REFERENCES 92

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS
AND FIGURES 98

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[...] the qualities we inherited from the past can become a discipline for change today. [...] A town´s past, its present and its future must combine to create a recognizable unit, so that its growth can be seen [...].

Due to the growing societal trends, change becomes a desire to fulfill the demands of the society in order to maintain a towns unique character. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to describe how and why an architectural intervention is chosen to enhance the towns competitive differentiation and how to create a unique experience through design that contributes to a dialogue between culture and nature.

Moreover, the decision-making process is explored through observations and investigations, in addition to interviews with professionals and non-professionals, as the basis for reframing the place through design. Additionally, the paper also presents a case study describing the integration in the Austrian town, Ramsau am Dachstein, by exemplifying the conditions under which the design is chosen, the requirements it must fulfill and the influence of Alpine tourism development regulations.

This case study reveals two approaches for implementing an architectural intervention, since functionality aspects and business-driven ideologies become increasingly important in tourism, whilst design aims to involve design-driven solutions and user-experiences. This is why by no means, this paper aims to contribute a statement on the importance of the collaboration between tourism and design.

The project is driven by a vision of an ideal environment and was born as part of the implementation of a new tourism development concept, which in turn led to a new concept of design. This new tourism development concept, which was also defined as `active holiday` by the tourism organization, involves nothing other than the result of an expression of a new kind of consumer. In this context the term `identity` expresses, on one hand, the needs of tourists to reveal their own individual and social identity, and on the other hand, the form of expression adopted by the town to meet with this demands. The desire to search for authentic experiences and territorial identity can be seen as one of the most significant changes of contemporary tourism. Therefore this new tourism development concept is based on following three indicators: (1) sustainable development, (2) the creation of individual tourist offers and (3) marketing planning.

However, the study focuses on conceptualizing an architectural intervention, which carries a solution proposal to support the corporate identity of the town. It is believed, that a balance between the two oppositional perceptions of tourism and design can only be achieved by directing the future in a way based on the individual character of the town. In other words, in this environment, *`design can be integrated to a certain extent as long as it suits the concept of tourism.`*

1.
INTRODUCTION

The content of this paper consists of five major chapters, beginning with an introduction. This part familiarizes the reader with the objective, the background and the significance of the project. The second part is called theoretical framework. This chapter builds the theoretical basis and defines the starting point for exploring the field of architectural interventions and the development of Alpine tourism. The third section presents a case study describing the observational and visual research of the chosen place and the collaboration among the designer, the tourism professionals and non-professionals, such as tourists and locals. The forth section of this paper focuses on the concept development and the integration of an architectural intervention in the town Ramsau am Dachstein, by exemplifying the conditions under which the design is chosen, the requirements it must fulfill and the influence of regional tourism development regulations. It provides a design proposal for enhancing the tourism and to satisfy user and local needs. Finally, a summary and discussion presents and evaluates the most important result of the design process while focusing on their implication.

1.1 OBJECTIVE

The paper aims to disclose the current scope of how we have begun to repurpose our build environment for shared use, among new and different types of interventions being established. Furthermore, the objective is to understand how and why architectural interventions are chosen to enhance the identiy of a touristic place. This involves a further description and analysis of the decision making process between design and tourism. Therefore, the main research question which influences the project is:

How can an intervention strengthen the quality and diversity of a touristic place and its identity by visually emphasizing the sites unique scenery?

This research question has two contributing questions, which focus on the ecological interest in nature as well as opportunities for the local economy.

In order to answer these questions, a study of tourism in the Alpine area will be undertaken as well as an understanding of the evolution of architectural interventions. This analysis will lead to further researching and developing innovative improvements and new solutions to the field in order to enhance the towns competitive differentiation. Furthermore it aims to enhance the ability to create meaningful architecture for the social, functional and economic activities. Thus, the results of this research are summarized and applied into a final proposal and sets premises for conceptualizing an architectural intervention.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Today in the 21th century, tourism have gained in importance. Locality and their environment has to be redefined in order to satisfy the social perceptions. Especially

the ability to adapt with the latest developments can be seen as one key qualification which is required in order to keep up with the modernization of tourism destinations.

For many, the railroad was symbol of the 19th century progress that facilitated economic wealth, social betterment, democracy and much more. The train, and later the car, recast the relationship between the town and the countryside and a lot of tourist destinations was made accessible through fully developed transportation networks and the construction of infrastructure. Today, modern society forces people to travel, whether for education, studying or job-seeking. Additionally, leisure time travelling has become an essential part of Western civilization.[1]

What does this mean for the tourism today? How important does the perception of our environment become and how does one define contemporary tourism? How to create an identiy that is socially sustainable and how to implement physical infrastructure that is environmentally friendly?

The landscape has been framed as scenery by designers since the Renaissance. Varying views have been opened and made accessible by choreographed scenic paths - from treks in the Alps to walkways along military forts - and attracted more and more visitors. In fact, the desire to stage the scenery is inherent in many type of contemporary projects, serving as tourist attractions and addressing the identity of the local environment as well as allowing recurring casual social encounter. It is noticeable, that places with a high degree of landscape pay a key role in supporting the tourism.[2]

Many anthropologist are concerned with the changes in society and its impact on the perception of our environment and place. Marc Augé, a French anthropologist, distinguishes between places with and without history. He claims places, which do not have an identity or history, to be *´non-places´*.[3] According to Magnaghi´s perspective, a place is *`the result of the interactions between the community with its own environment, where Design can contribute with its tools and research methods in order to develop new forms of interactions that improve the quality of life in the region.`*[4] Even though the discussion leads to a more abstract approach towards the topic, one cannot disclaim the fact that the increase of public places remains and the role of users becomes more relevant. However, the discussion about public places and their meanings continues and concern a large variety of scientists, engineers, architects and other professionals.

This paper examines the subject of architectural interventions and Alpine tourism from the designers perspective. It is believed, that designers, who work with and around touristic places should not solely be concerned about their benefit for the business and its market. They should also consider their meaning, their degree of utilization as well as the role of users. Rather than enhancing the place with nice-

[1] Holdaway, E. & Smart, G. 2000

[2] Holdaway, E. & Smart, G. 2000
[3] Augé, M. 1995
[4] Simeone, G. 2013, p. 1-2

looking features only, it is the designers task to add value and meaning for users and locals alike. In other words, on one hand, they need to know the context and its community, on the other hand, they need to collaborate with non-designers in order to develop creative and feasible solutions which are coherent with the context. This leads to the assumption that a collaboration and knowledge exchange among tourism professionals and the designer during the creation process will be an essential part of this study. By analyzing and understanding the operational procedures within this field, the designer is able to develop a better variety of suitable and valuable solutions. Especially where functional and aesthetical decisions have to be made a collaborative approach among professionals becomes inescapable.

As the topic of tourism is broad and complex, this paper consolidated the most important aspects while chiefly using Ramsau am Dachstein as an example. The project was born as part of the implementation of a new tourism development concept, which in turn led to a new concept of design. This new tourism development concept, which was also defined as `active holiday` - cultural or sports, naturalistic or religious - by the tourism organization, involves nothing other than the result of an expression of a new kind of consumer. In this context the term `identity` expresses, on one hand, the needs of tourists to reveal their own individual and social identity, and on the other hand, the form of expression adopted by the town to meet with this demands. The desire to search for authentic experiences and territorial identity can be seen as one of the most significant changes of contemporary tourism. Since the practice of an extreme sport can be an authentic experience, as well as the indigenous identity of a town, the tourism is becoming a catalyst for new tourist groups and an element of identity.
However, this new tourism development concept is based on the three indicators: (1) sustainable development, (2) creation of individual tourist offers and (3) marketing planning.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE AND CONTEXT

The major subject of this paper describes the collaborative approach between design-driven and tourism-driven practices. In this matter, the accumulation of literature is important. The changing social and environmental perception in terms of tourism and the overall development of architectural interventions are a new phenomenon compared to other design concerns. Therefore, little research has been published in this field. Especially relevant and current literature about architectural interventions arising from tourism is limited to access and most cases are not relevant for this study. Instead, many publications focus on the visualization of the latest solutions. Explanations about the project planning and reasons for implementing the project are missing in most of the literature.

Due to the difficulty of finding useful and reliable information, the case study method was seen as one approach to gain deeper insights through expert interviews and individual observation. Furthermore, the topic of tourist demands is of increasing importance throughout the investigation and defines another remarkable reason for exploring the field. This is why by no means, this paper aims to provide an analysis of the changing societal trends and their impact on the environment, in order to contribute a statement on the importance of tourism and design.

2.
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is comprised of a literature review and elaborated with an empirical case study. This chapter presents the theoretical framework of this study. The information in this section enables the designer to understand the complex interplay between the two fields of tourism and design.

The content is defined by two major aspects: architectural interventions and Alpine tourism. Firstly, architectural interventions, their subcategories and definitions will be examined. This involves an overview of their origin and their change in time.
The second part of the chapter describes examples of existing architectural interventions and introduces different design possibilities. This provides, among others, a foundation for better understanding the phenomena of interventions by combining them in a new manner as well as contributes an essential and common basis for further discussions.
Finally, tourism and the most essential terms related to this field are explained in the following sections of the paper. This illustrates further definitions about tourism in general, societal trends and the development as such. Both parts lead to the challenge of developing an architectural intervention among the current conditions of tourism.

2.1 ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTIONS

Perceiving our environment from a different perspective is something that always fascinated people. For centuries, the outlook from towers served primarily as protection for danger, such as fires, wild animals or approaching enemies, but also as a statement of power. There have been structures for sending signals like lighthouses, airport towers, television towers or towers for measuring the landscape. **(1-4)** Overall, it can be stated, that there is barely any building that does not serve to provide a view.[5]

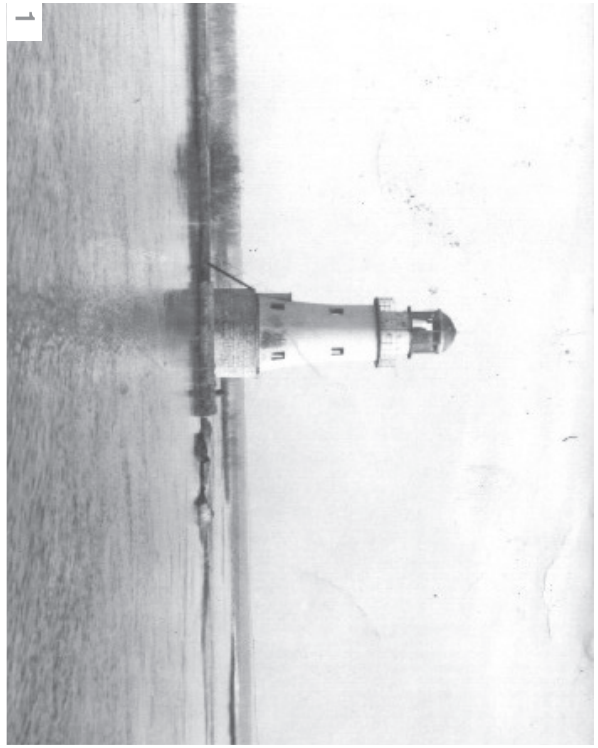
With the development of tourism during the 19th century, the lookout tower experienced a revival that has continued to the present day. *What happened?*

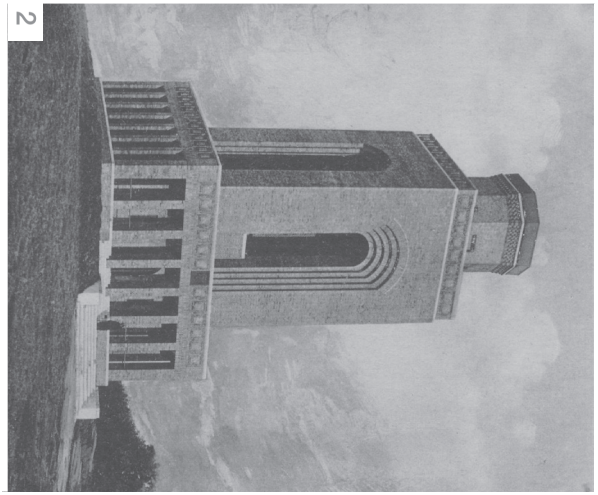
2.1.1 THE ORIGIN OF THE PANORAMIC VIEW

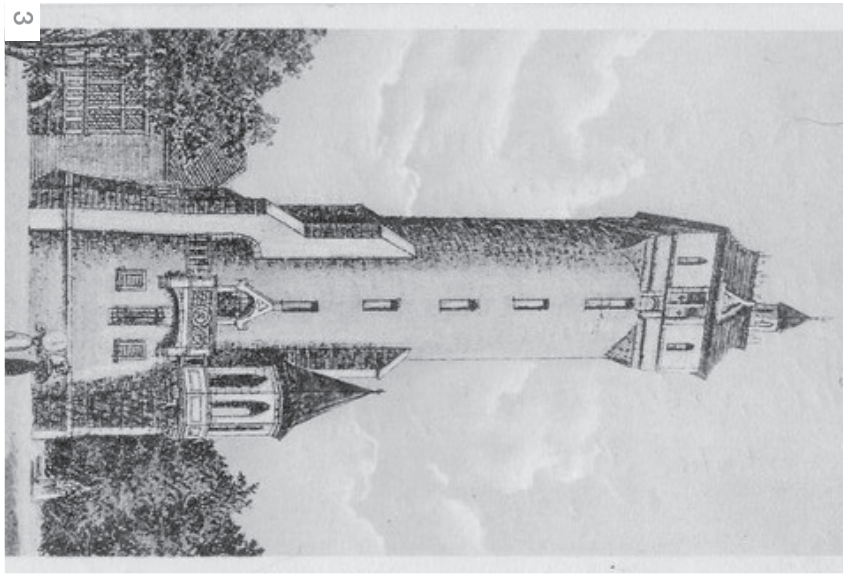
By looking back to the earliest period of lookout architecture, namely the last 15th century, when the first Belvedere **(5)** on a hill was built, architects created a new type of structure that offered pictorially framed views into the landscape and served as a place of relaxation. Even though, the Belvedere was reserved for nobility, larger sections of the middle class experienced 360° views as painted images, which surrounded the viewer. Already Leon Battista Alberti, had famously instructed painters in *De picture* **(6)** to consider the frame of a painted image as a view through an open window. Albertis metaphorical window has long been challenged by painters, photographers, as well as Le Corbusiers architectural windows. Unlike the Belvedere, this new understanding of art was able to open the view to all sides.[6]

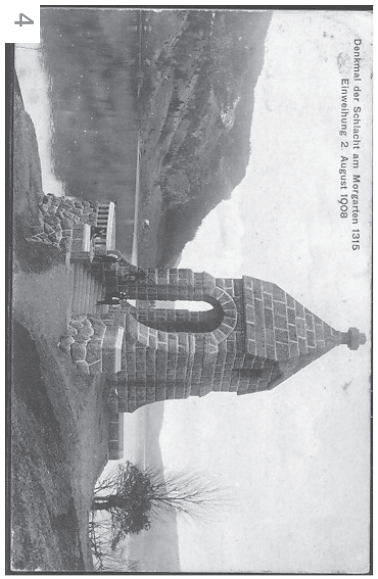
But in fact, soon this principle, including the term panorama, was being applied to the

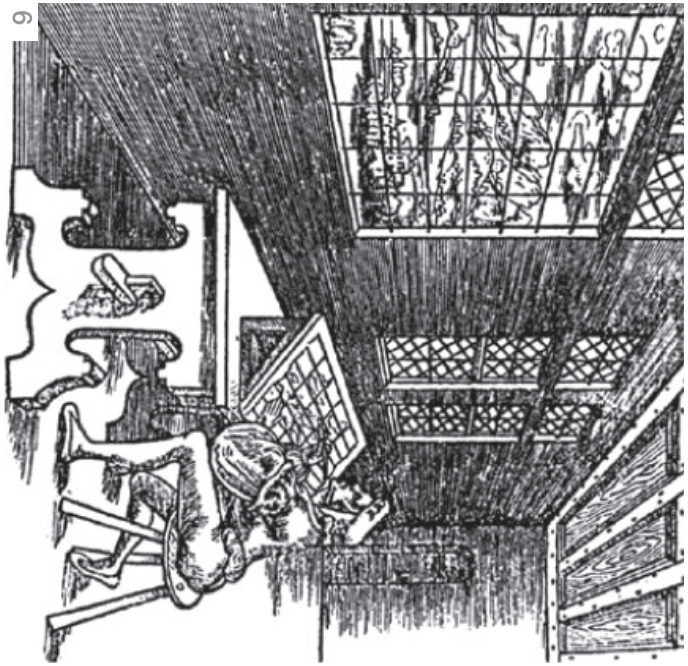
[5] (ed.) S AM Schweizerisches Architekturmuseum 2013
[6] (ed.) Beyer, A. & Butioni, M. & Grave, J. 2011











Picture 1 | Observer Lighthouse
Picture 2 | Bruno Möhring, Bismarckturm, Burg i. Spreewald 1017

Picture 3 | Carl Schäfer, Kaiser Wilhelm Turm Spiegelslust, Marburg 1890
Picture 4 | Robert Rittmeyer, Denkmal für die Schlacht bei Morgarten 1908

Picture 5 | Belvedere, Landschaftspark Spiegelsberge, Halberstadt 1782
Picture 6 | Leon Battista Alberti, De picture 1435

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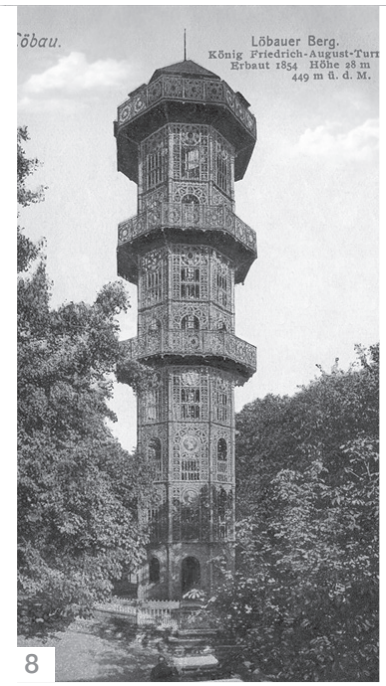

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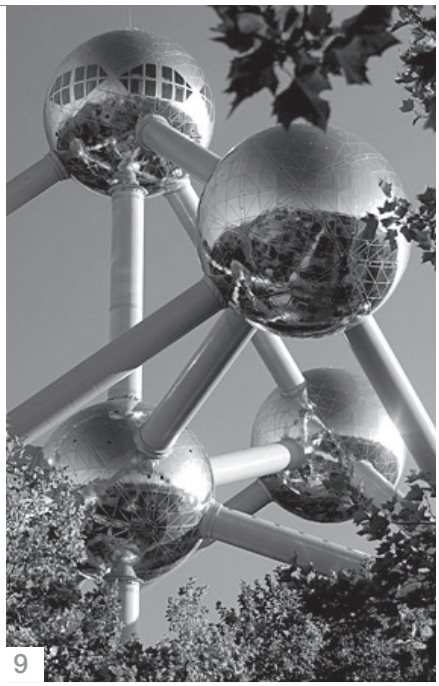

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Picture 7 | Aussichtsturm zum weißen Stein, Dossenheim 1906
Picture 8 | Aussichtsturm Löbauer Berg 1854

Picture 9 | Atomium in Brussels
Picture 10 | Space Needle in Seattle

Picture 11 | Eiffel Tower in Paris
Picture 12 | Orbit in London

open landscape, where people could experience a structure only for looking into the landscape. Particularly towards the end of the 19th century, the construction of lookout architectures became a mass phenomenon in many countries.[7]

2.1.2 LOOKOUT TOWERS - FROM TRADITIONAL TO FREE FORMS

However, devoid of any military function, many of the newly built architectures, which adorned the hilltops, resembled castle towers or watchtowers made from rustic stone. **(7)** `Nevertheless, over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, cast iron **(8)**, steel and concrete replaced the traditional solid brick structure and opened up new dimensions in terms of height, while timber construction often represented a cheaper alternative, and still does today. Alongside structural and financial considerations, other factors also determine the selection of materials. Wood or stone can establish a local connection to the site, Corton steel refers to the industrial landscape, steel grids and glass allow particularly sophisticated constructions`[8] that underline the sometimes desired effect of dizziness.

To this day, many towers still present themselves as wooden or steel structures. The same was also true in the decades after the World War II, when relatively few new tower structures emerged, usually plain forms. However, the spectacular lookout structures built in the context of world or national exhibitions, such as the **Atomium (9)** in Brussels or the **Space Needle (10)** in Seattle, are worthy of note. The Space Needle is an observation tower built for the 1962 World Fair. These can ultimately be traced back to the archetypal **Eiffel Tower (11),** built for the 1889 World Fair in Paris, which was described as a triumph of the constructive monument and the highlight of the exhibition. London´s **Orbit (12)** by Anish Kapoor and Cecil Balmond, a 115 meter observation tower, can also be seen as a tourist-friendly, 21th century interpretation of Gustave Eiffel´s tower. But despite its similarities as an observation tower or even as a communication tower, the Orbit is primarily known as Europe´s tallest piece of public art.[9]

In many cases, the lookout tower was also combined with the use as a monument. However, as is demonstrated by the **Forest Tower (13)** by SeArch in Putten, and the **Observation Tower (14)** on the River Mur in Styria, by Loenhart and Mayr, it can be seen, that even the historically influenced tower can be transformed into something spectacular.[10] The access and construction principle of the Observation Tower is based on the idea of a double helix that is perceived as a continuous path rising up through the trees. There is a surprising link to the historical double spiral staircase in Graz Castle. The architects were inspired by that staircase built around 1500 and well known for the unique spatial atmosphere it creates. In a homage to this historical site, the Austrian poet Erich Freud wrote, that `*the double spiral staircase connects space and time like a screw.*`[11] The tower was originally meant to mark the

[7] (ed.) S AM Schweizerisches Architekturmuseum 2013
[8] (ed.) S AM Schweizerisches Architekturmuseum 2013, p. 11
[9] (ed.) S AM Schweizerisches Architekturmuseum 2013
[10] (ed.) S AM Schweizerisches Architekturmuseum 2013
[11] ArchDaily. Observation Tower on the River Mur 2011

European Green Belt. But, in fact, it has become an architectural sculpture and a lookout that offers a panoramic view of the landscape.

In general, unlike historical monuments, functional aspects have been reduced to its structural core and solutions were represented more clearly, such as the relationship to the environment, the aesthetic qualities of the place as well as the choice of materials. Therefore, this kind of approach could be seen as a particularly free from of architecture over the course of the 20th century.

2.1.3 THE ROLE OF A NEW LEISURE SOCIETY

Lookout architectures proved to be the ideal destination for a Sunday excursion **(15)** into the landscape, enabling an aesthetic experience. The railway caused distances to vanish and offered the basic infrastructure for temporary escape from the city. Most of the visitors came to enjoy the outstanding scenic qualities, but have been also attracted by the variety of opportunities for active recreation the town could offer. The importance of opportunities for people to enjoy the countryside was already well known and reflected a new trend towards nature. The architectures itself and the view into the natural environment served as attractions for thousands of visitors and consequently affected the tourism.[12]

Published principles of tourism in the countryside have noted the importance of managing a close relationship between tourism and recreation in order to provide a unique experience for visitors, and emphasized that it should `(1) draw on the character of the place itself (2) obtain practical contributions to conservation and recreation programs (3) be well designed and in keeping with the landscape (4) support the rural economy and seek wider geographical [...] spread (5) deepen peoples understanding of the countryside.`[13]

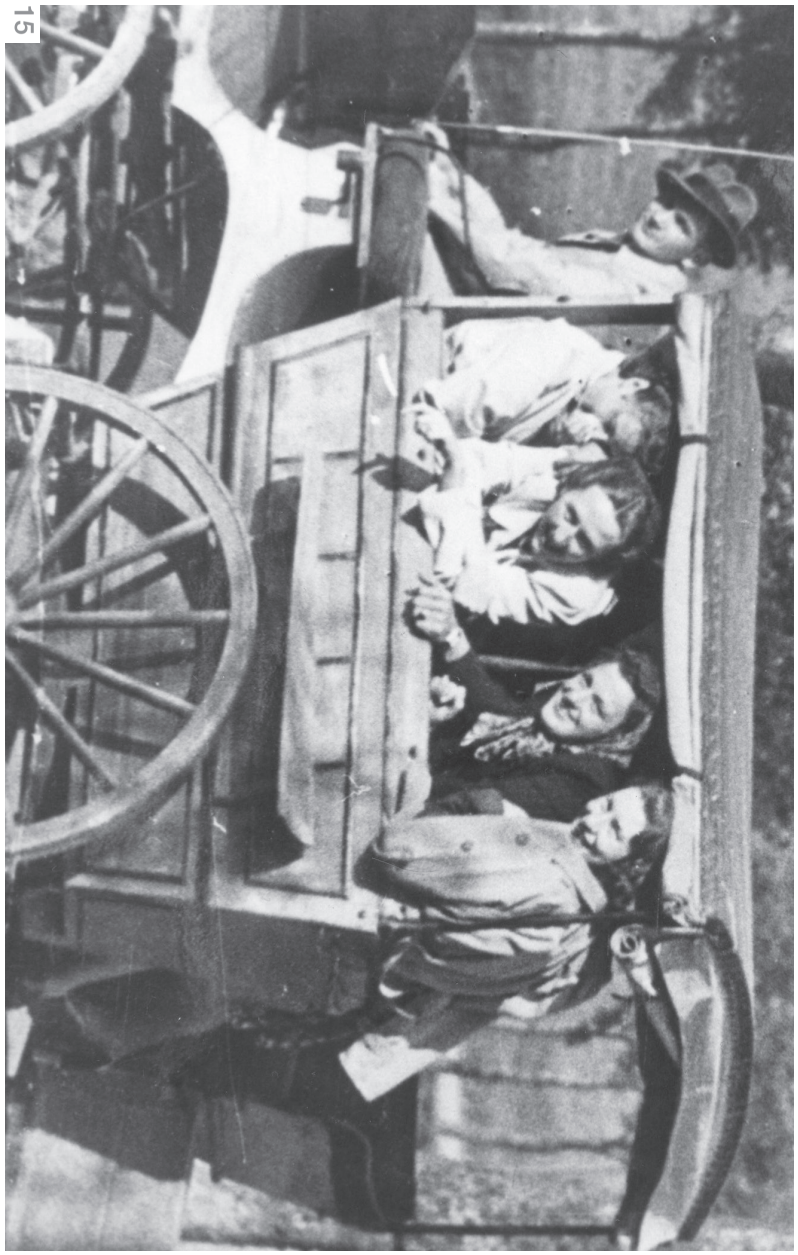
In this respect, it is only natural that the lookout architecture has already become a popular means of expression, particularly in the field of tourism. Today, the landscape as scenery has led to the desire of tourists to search for particular points of observation. Demands on tourism offers and their quality also changed, and consequently led to an increased emphasis on personal values. The new leisure society is no longer tied to a particular physical setting, but actually may locate based on personal preferences.[14] According to British sociologist John Urry, such an expression is called the *`tourist gaze`*[15] and therefore lookout architecture is predestined for use as an eye-catcher and adding interest to panoramic views.

2.1.4 CHANGE IN MEANING

It is also noticeable that the lookout architecture has become more attractive in many countries and continents, due to it being allocated new roles, particularly in recent years. On one hand, lookout structures, are emerging as visitor platforms above inner city transformation zones to satisfy curiosity; on the other hand, towers are taking on new significance with regard to an ecological

[12] Holdaway, E. & Smart, G. 2000

[13] Holdaway, E. & Smart, G. 2000, p. 137
[14] Schmitz, M.F. & Diaz, P. 2014
[15] cited in Holdaway, E. & Smart, G. 2000, p. 126



Picture 13 | Forest Tower in Putten
Picture 14 | Observation Tower in Graz & double spiral staircase, Graz Castle 1500

Picture 15 | Sunday excursion in the countryside 1900

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Picture 16 | Treetop Walkway
Picture 17 | London Eye in London

interest in nature, as demonstrated by the **Treetop Walkway (16)**, for example. Inspired by nature that surrounds the place, Mark Barfield, who also designed the **London Eye (17)**, sought to develop a structure that would have a relationship with its natural environment. The 200 meter long walkway, at 18 meters high, guides visitors around the broad-leaved trees of the designed woodland area. Supported by rusted steel columns that blend in with the natural environment, it provides opportunities for inspecting the relationships that exist between tree roots, the soil and the organism as well as offers possibilities for seeing birds, insects or blossom emerging.[16]

2.2 DIFFERENT APPROACHES AND TYPES OF ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTIONS

As history tells us, lookout architectures have always been of significance for society. Although it seems to blend well into any landscape or urban setting, it drew increasing criticism towards the end of the 19th century and were seen as unsuccessful interventions during the Heimatschutz (homeland protection) movement. For instance, Paul Schultze-Naumburg, a German architect, painter, publicist and politician, wrote: *`Lookout towers indeed! They constitute a bad chapter in the story of our shaping of the landscape. It should not, by any means, be asserted that a lookout tower cannot also represent an enrichment, if it appears in the right place with the right form. The tower-weeds that sprawl all over our mountains today ... These sickly forms [...] have now disfigured the land everywhere, making its most visible points the ugliest.`*[17]
Nevertheless, over the past years, a diverse group of architects, landscape architects, engineers and artists have proven differently and undertaken groundbreaking projects that propose an integration of landscape and architecture, dissolving traditional distinctions between building and environment. Not only towers or platforms, but also small architectures can be the subject. Sometimes even a minimal intervention is all it takes to enable a new perspective on the surrounding.

The paper divides the projects into four design decisions, which are (1) **Amusement** (2) **Thrill** (3) **Vertigo** and (4) **Momentous**. What these projects all have in common is the desire to pay attention to the place where design and nature meet and offer a diverse range of surprising interpretations of our surroundings.

2.2.1 AMUSEMENT

According to Johan Huizinga, a Dutch historian and one of the founders of modern cultural history, to this day, the amusing is a fundamental element of any culture. This explains why purpose-free structures for looking into the landscape have always been part of major events that are primarily dedicated to enjoyment, such as world fairs or national exhibitions. Rollercoaster's and vertical towers are known from leisure parks, which is why some contemporary lookout architectures, such as the **Orbit (18)**, the Olympic Park Tower in London, by

[16] (ed.) S AM Schweizerisches Architekturmuseum 2013

[17] cited in (ed.) S AM Schweizerisches Architekturmuseum 2013, p. 8

artist Sir Anish Kapoor or the **Tiger and Turtle (19)** in Duisburg, by Heike Mutter and Ulrich Genth, refer to elements from the amusement park environment. The 21 meter high sculptural walkway is named Tiger and Turtle - Magic Mountain and is positioned upon a hilltop. A staircase winds across the surface of the steel structure, which spirals around itself just like the fairground ride. Visitors can climb onto the sculpture where it meets the ground, but a loop at the centre prevents anyone being able to walk a full circle. From a distance it creates the impression of speed and exceeding acceleration, but viewed from close up it turns out to be a stairway which follows the course of the rollercoaster. [18]

2.2.2 THRILL

Lately, another form of lookout architecture emerged, not always as a tower, but always between earth and sky - the Sky Walk. The Frame Structure of Haus-Rucker Co. in 1977 **(20)** was built as a walk-in sculpture and can be mentioned as an inspiration of a number of viewing platforms designed to extend far over an abyss. Many of these structures are spectacular both to look at and look out from, such as the **Il Spir (21)** by Corinna Menn, in Switzerland, or the steel and glass, horseshoe-shaped walkway of the **Grand Canyon Skywalk (22)** in Arizona, by David Jin, which extends 21 meter over the the Grand Canyon.[19]

Also the mountain-top platform **Top of Tyrol (23)** by LAAC Architekten is a viewing platform located 3000 meter above sea level at the Stubai Glacier and causes an interplay between construction and landscape. Weathering steel was used in the structure to account for the extreme weather conditions, in order to stand 9 meter away from the mountain. The platform invites visitors to stop for an extended summit rest or to enjoy the beauty of the glacier.[20]

Matteo Thuns binocular-shaped **Gucker (24)** is located in the gardens of Trauttmansdorff Castle in Italy. The see-through platform creates awareness and a sense of floating 25 meter above the rocks and 200 meter over the bottom of Adige Valley.[21]

Another structure, which not only offers a sensational view, but also is spectacular to behold, is the **AlpspiX (25)** viewing platform by Wallmann architects, at the base of Germany´s Alpspitze Mountain. The platform comprises two steel beams shaping a floating X over a vertical drop and when the 25 meter long walk to the end of the glass platform is reached, visitors can look 1000 meter down into the Valley.[22]

The last project listed in this category is the **Glacier Sky Walk (26)** in the Jasper National Park. `*We wanted to give people the opportunity to get out of their car, to experience this incredible landscape in a way that would provide a cerebral connection to our changing natural environment,*` explained the architect Jeremy Sturgess. `*The design is founded in the idea of a mountainside outcropping, to exist as an organic extension of the landscape.*`[23] The Glacier Skywalk is a 450 meter interpretive walk carved and folded into the mountainous landscape

[18] cited in (ed.) S AM Schweizerisches Architekturmuseum 2013
[19] (ed.) S AM Schweizerisches Architekturmuseum 2013
[20] ArchDaily. Top of Tyrol 2009
[21] Broto, C. 2013
[22] Broto, C. 2013
[23] ArchDaily. Glacier Skywalk 2014

of the Canadian Rockies. The weathered steel, glass, stone and wood, that are set into the hillside, were chosen for their sustainable qualifications and to complement the surrounding landscape of rocks, trees and water. The walkway is based on the concept of creating an experience of a natural extension of the land by providing different zones dedicated to the ecology, geology and history of the landscape.

2.2.3 VERTIGO

Recently, the number of projects in cities have also been increasing due to a changed, and much more positively, perception of urban places. The **Metropol Parasol (27)** in Seville by Jürgen Mayer, with its innovative timber-construction defines a unique relationship between the historical and the new contemporary urban centre - a place that provides a variety of markets and restaurants. The new icon is dimensioned that the visitor looks just over the rooftops, whereas the **Phoenix Observation Tower (28)** by the Danish studio BIG, becomes a new point of reference for the urban skyline. Walking downwards from the top through a continuous spiral promenade, the visitor is able to experience the building in a constant motion and enjoy a dynamic 360° view over the city of Phoenix and the Arizonian landscape. [24]

The **High Line (29)**, as a ribbon-shaped greenway, enables new perspectives on Manhattan through the redevelopment of an abandoned, elevated freight-railway that extends 22 blocks through the west side. It features cultural attractions as well as integrated architectural and plant life. Additionally, the recycling of the railway into an urban park has, with interest from a touristic point of view, reinforced the real estate development in the neighborhoods.[25]

2.2.4 MOMENTOUS

As explained earlier, since the 19th century, tourism has been the driving force behind the construction of lookout architectures, and it remains so to this day. The tourism develops at a considerable speed and diversifies continuously in a multi-faceted way. The goal is, by means of architectural attractions, either to upgrade an existing destination, to create a new one or to reach new target groups. It constitutes not only the base for the booming European city tourism but acts more and more as an instrument for fostering tourism in rural areas.

Therefore this overview includes landscapes that are touristically staged via various interventions, one such example is **Ruta del Peregino (30)** in Mexico, the accentuation of an existing pilgrimage route through small structures from national and international architectural offices. The Ruta del Peregrino, a 117 kilometer long route, is said to be the most traveled pilgrimage route. On the initiative of the provincial government, the tourism office arranged for Dellekamp Arquitectos to develop a master plan that `*complemented and enhanced*` the existing route and `*accentuated its relationship with the landscape.*`[26] The nine sculptural buildings at different locations along the route were

[24] ArchDaily. Metropol Parasol 2010 & ArchDaily. Phoenix Observation Tower 2012

[25] Holdaway, E. & Smart, G. 2000

[26] ArchDaily. The Pilgrim Route 2008

designed for resting, praying or meditating as viewing points, stopping and starting places or for staying overnight. Since then, the number of pilgrims has increased steadily.

The National Tourist Route in Norway reaches out over the entire country. The goal behind is not just the improvement of infrastructure, but also branding the country through outstanding architectures. This project was launched in 1994 with the intention to help increasing the tourism in Norway´s rural areas by improving the technical and cultural infrastructure. Specific architectural interventions are being realized on 18 different routes, involving infrastructural construction and gastronomy as well as museums or cultural locations, but above all, lookout points for staging the experience of the landscape.[27]

Located on Norway's west coast, within a dramatic pass between the deep fjords of the region, **Trollstigen (31)**, is regarded as one of the country's most popular attraction. Through the notion of water as a dynamic element and rock as a static element, the project creates a series of relations that describe the unique spatiality of the site. The architecture is characterized by clear and precise transitions between planned zones and the natural landscape, so that the visitor´s experience seems even more intimate.[28]

The design for the wooden viewing platform of the **Aurland Lookout (32)** in Stegastein followed the architects principle of *`nature first, architecture second.`*[29] The glass panel at the end gives visitors the impression they could simply fall off the end, offering an incredible view into the Aurlandsfjord, 609 meter below.

The rippled timber core of the **Wild Reindeer Observation Pavilion (33)** by architects Snøhetta mirrors the curves of the surrounding mountains and is used as an education centre. The structure is based on a rigid outer shell and an organic inner core. The exterior and the interior create a protected and warm gathering place, while still preserving the visitor´s view of the spectacular panorama. A long history filled with travelers, hunting traditions, mining and military activities, as well as the Dovre Mountains hold significant importance in the Norwegian consciousness.[30]

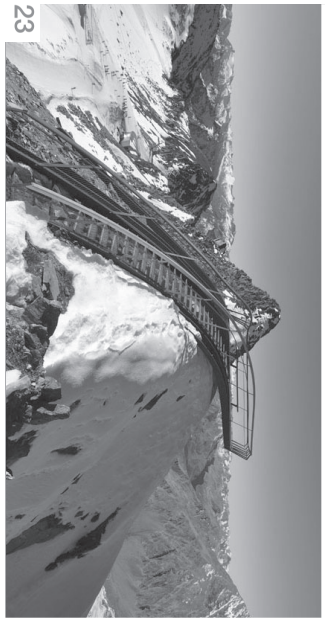
The third project which should be mentioned in this category, Austria's highest international border, happens also to be one of the country's highest architecturally choreographed landscape route. Along the road, architectural sculptures reveal the areas of nature, history, culture, economy and society - the so called **Timmelsjoch Experience (34)** by architect Werner Tscholl. Serving as a kind of decentralized museum, five sculptural architectural interventions - the walkway, smugglers, pass museum, telescope and garnets - convey cultural historical information and set the views in scene.[31]

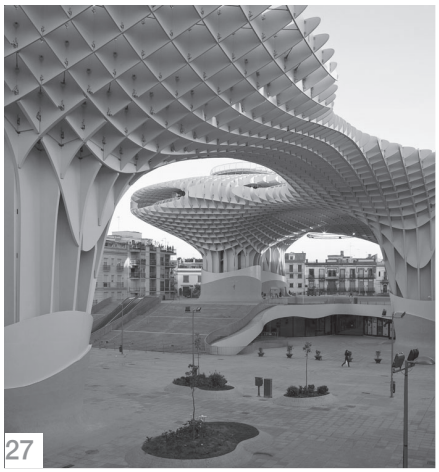
As the number of interventions is unlimited, this chapter compiled a selection of original contemporary solutions, a range of formal and informal interventions, reclamations and architecture.

[27] (ed.) S AM Schweizerisches Architekturmuseum 2013
[28] Broto, C. 2013
[29] ArchDaily. Aurland Lookout 2008
[30] Holdaway, E. & Smart, G. 2000
[31] ArchDaily. Timmelsjoch Experience 2012

Picture 18 | Orbit in London
Picture 19 | Tiger and Turtle in Duisburg

Picture 20 | Haus-Rucker Co., Rahmenbau, Kassel 1977
Picture 21 | Il Spir in Switzerland
Picture 22 | Grand Canyon Skywalk in Arizona
Picture 23 | Top of Tyrol in Tyrol
Picture 24 | Gucker in Italy
Picture 25 | AlpspiX in Germany
Picture 26 | Glacier Sky Walk in Jasper National Park

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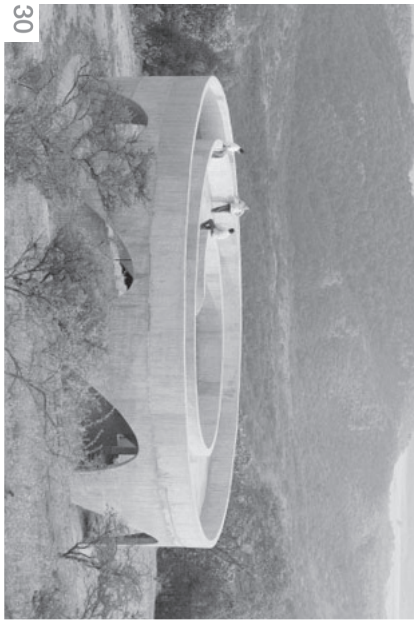
Picture 27 | Metropol Parasol in Seville
Picture 28 | Phoenix Observation Tower
Picture 29 | High Line in New York

Picture 30 | Ruta del Peregino in Mexico
Picture 31 | Trollstigen in Norway
Picture 32 | Aurland Lookout in Norway
Picture 33 | Wild Reindeer Observation Pavillion in Norway



Picture 34 | Timmelsjoch Experience in Austria

2.3 THE SITUATION AND IMPACT OF TOURISM IN THE ALPINE AREA

2.3.1 LEISURE AND DISCOVERY ACTIVITIES

The Alps represent one of the oldest tourist regions worldwide and the largest recreational area in Central Europe. They have always been seen as different because of their relative remoteness in comparison with lowland regions. It was a disadvantage at first for those regions that experienced interest from the lowlands but became progressively an asset with the development of transportation, the growing globalization and the boom of tourism.[32]

The first Alpine attractions that brought people from the urbanized lowland to come to the Alps started in the 18th century, due to the increasing interest in the spectacular mountain landscape and the spiritual value of the environment, as well as the pleasant horror that Alpine cliffs **(35)** were causing in the Romantic minds. In the 19th century, when the spirit of the first Alpinism began to overcome this perspective, tourists started to come regularly to the Alps, mainly in the summertime.[33]

Since World War II improvements in technology, medicine and the social system led to a general change of Alpine tourism. The economic growth in Europe, higher income for the working class, the assurance of holiday entitlements, individual mass mobility and a high quality road infrastructure, all contributed to make the Alps a destination for a wider group of people. Peripheral Alpine valleys and their small towns entered the market, but, in turn, must provide the necessary and high-quality infrastructure expected by tourists. Many farmers offered accommodation and food to improve the still low income and overcome poverty.[34]

The years after the World War II was characterized by mass tourism and a decline of summer tourism, largely due to an increasing demand in terms of sporting facilities and infrastructures, and has led to a diversification of outdoor activities. Snow and ice - related sports **(36)** experienced an explosion in popularity and the winter tourism began to develop seriously with the gradual appearance of more and better organized sporting facilities. Since then, the great majority of the overnight stays in the main areas is registered in the winter season, even though in the whole Alpine area, summer tourism still prevails.[35]

[32] (ed.) Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention 2013
[33] (ed.) Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention 2013
[34] (ed.) Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention 2013
[35] Employees at the Tourism Office Ramsau am Dachstein 2014

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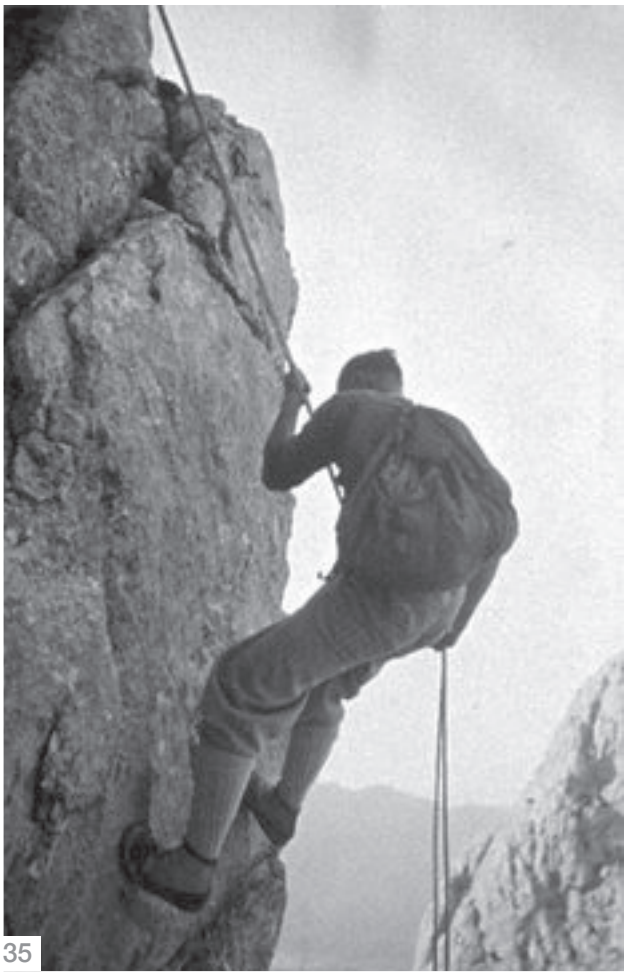

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Picture 35 | Climbing Picture 36 | ski jump, cross country skiing & skiing

2.3.2 GEOGRAPHICAL STRUCUTURE

Around two-third of Austria´s surface area is covered by Alps. Referring to the analysis of T-MONA, Austria´s guest monitoring system, which is based on surveys on travel behavior and socio-demographic data among domestic and foreign tourists in Austria, the main reasons for travelling to the selected destinations in Austria are the following: [36]

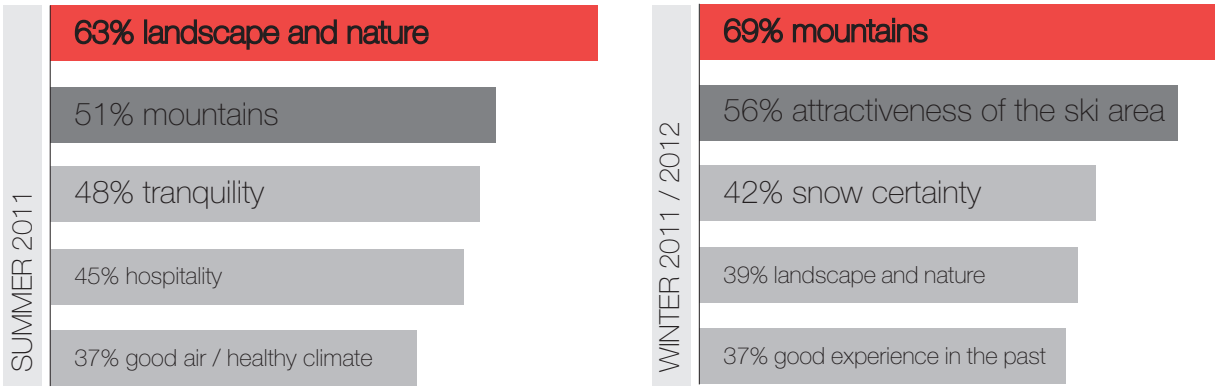

Figure 1 | Main reasons for travelling to the selected destination in Austria (% of all guests, multiple answers possible)

2.3.3 GENERAL SOCIETAL TRENDS

Studies of socio-cultural impacts of tourism in the Austrian Alps provided two schematic models; one is a conceptual framework of changes in economy, infrastructure and landscape, and the other shows changes in the way of life of the local population. Those are mainly based on the temptation to follow the trends in terms of economic and social standards. A balance between values, needs and desires of local people and tourists is being attained as locals become more integrated into the larger society, as well as the relationship to the tourism and ways to optimize benefits. The tension between conservation and development influences the position of the Alps on the international tourism market, with the pressure to preserve their specificities.[37]

2.3.4 CLIMATE CHANGES LEADING TO ADAPTATION NEEDS OF ALPINE TOURISM

Aside from societal trends, global warming has effects on tourism in Alpine areas. Recent studies on the consequence of global warming on winter sport destinations expect that only those located above 1200 meter will be able to ensure acceptable snow conditions. If this scenario is maintained in the future, the competition will continue to increase until non-profitable areas exit the market. Thus, the tourism industry is required not only to diversify its product but it should foster snow-independent tourism activities.[38]

Although climate change has negative social, environmental and economic consequences, it also opens up new potential and must be viewed as an incentive that is reinforcing and accelerating structural changes in tourism.

[36] (ed.) Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention 2013, p. 47

[37] Schmitz, M.F. & Diaz, P. 2014

[38] http://www.climateadaptation.eu/austria/tourism/ 2014

Aware of people´s expectations and the need to improve the quality of services, Alpine regions have already chosen to diversify their tourist activities, in particular by creating and making use of regional resources and thereby also their cultural heritage. This type of investment, with very different tourism offers covering the demand of several tourist groups, is providing profitable in both summer and winter. In this sense, climate change is already having an impact on leisure and discovery activities.[39]

2.3.5 THE CHALLENGE REGARDING DRIVING FORCES - EMBEDDING ALL SEASON TOURISM

Nevertheless, it is necessary to follow a strategy aiming to erase a certain image of the Alps in the summer season and to replace it with a more multi-faceted one: landscape and culture of course, but also the promotion of adventure sport activities such as climbing, mountain-biking, rafting, paragliding, etc. Moreover, some winter dominated destinations might find a niche by promoting less snow-dependent activities that focus on traditional features of the region, such as cultural travels, gourmet destinations, festivals, architecture, wellness holidays and business tourism.

Summarized, unique and authentic products with a long lasting cultural background will find a growing market of consumers willing to pay a fair price. The long tradition of the Alps as well as very specific local or regional values can be seen as an advantage for the development of various forms of tourism and to enter the market as an all season destination.[40]

[39] (ed.) Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention 2013

[40] (ed.) Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention 2013

3.
CASE STUDY

Ramsau am Dachstein

altitude: 1.135m
area: 75.33 km²
popuation: 2.766 (2014)

Schladming

altitude: 745m
area: 10.32 km²
popuation: 4.402 (2014)

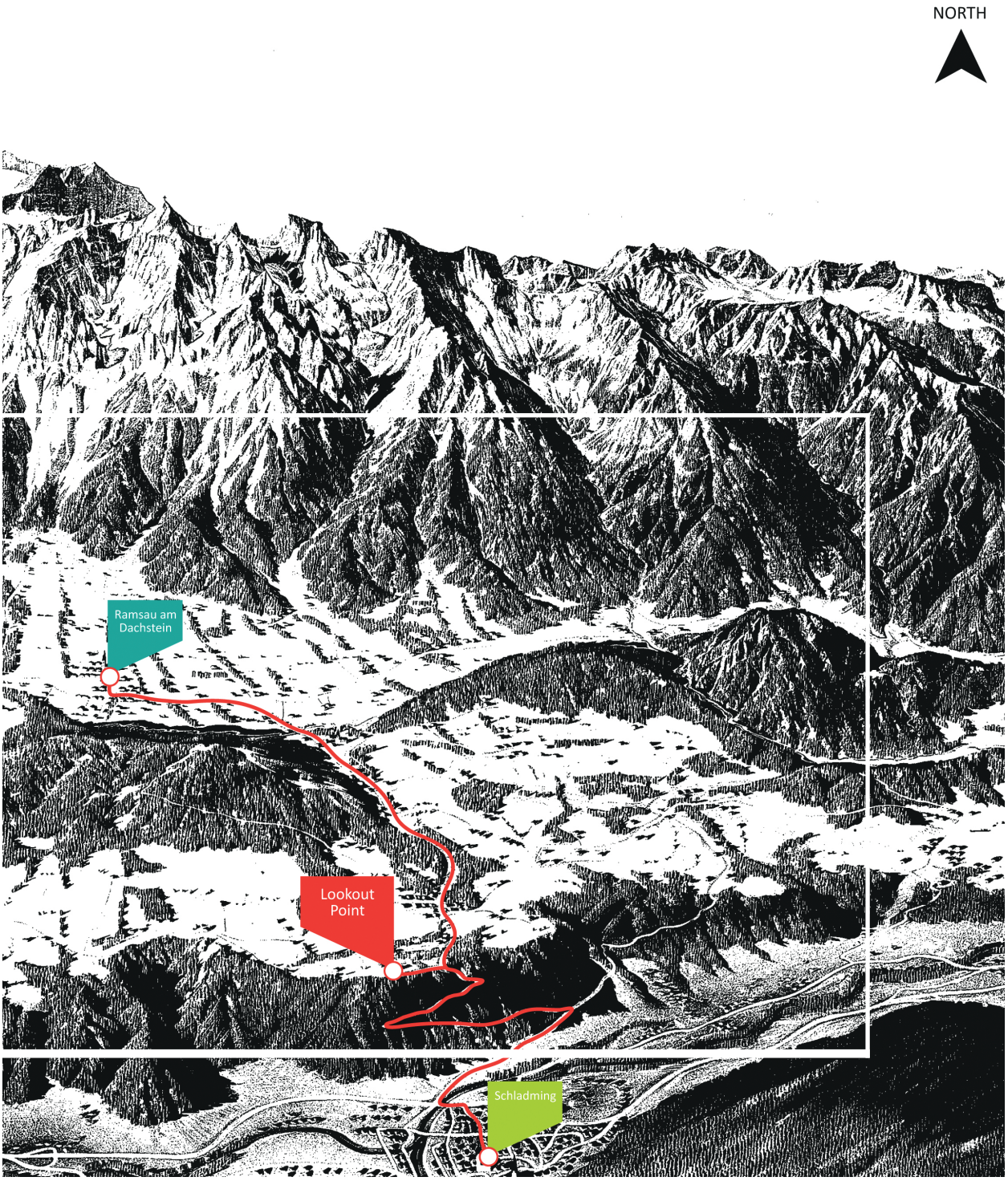

Figure 2 I Map Ramsau am Dachstein

Lookout point

altitude: 1.100m
area lookout point: 250m²
are car park: 210m²

Many places exist in our environment whose impact is becoming increasingly important, as leisure expands and new tourists emerge. The intention of the study is to explore ways of looking at the impact of tourism, and, in turn, to understand criteria relevant for the design implementation, as the basis for re-framing the place through design. Ramsau am Dachstein, a town with a primary interest in strengthen the tourism, is used as an example to exhibit these demands. This includes understanding, defining and analyzing the characteristics of the place. Additionally, with the help of tourism professionals as well as tourists and locals, it will be examined if the integration of an architectural intervention would benefit the tourism and the local community. Moreover, the case study enables the designer to reassess the theoretical framework with data by observing the place and aims to fully understand the reason for the changing needs of tourists.

The settlement of Ramsau am Dachstein, documentary certified in the 12th century, is spread 18 kilometer wide. The selected place is located at the southernmost point of the town, where the main traffic route from Schladming to Ramsau is nearby. It represents a plateau at the foot of the Dachstein Mountain, 1100 meter above sea level, surrounded by the Alps and a gradual descent towards the valley of Schladming. A place that harmoniously combine with the local community, with their way of being and their developed activities.

By investigating the place and its visiting people the aim was to answer the research question as well as its contributing questions. Due to the small network and the local based professionals, all experts were easy to approach and to motivate for participation. The beneficial conditions in this town made it possible to collect useful and reliable information, while contributing strong statements of high value for the study.

3.1 RAMSAU AM DACHSTEIN

In those days, the glaciers of the Dachstein Mountain created picturesque seascapes, deeply incised romantic valleys, as well as shaped the south-located plateau Ramsau am Dachstein. **(37-38)** The sunny plateau, 1100 - 1700 meter above sea level, is an 18 kilometer wide scattered settlement with several districts. Looking at the geographical structure, Ramsau am Dachstein is a tourism community at higher altitude, that has evolved from an agricultural settlement with around 1200 inhabitants recorded before World War I.

Ramsau am Dachstein is a place with a multi-faceted history. First documented in the 12th century, one of the most important events in the history is the Reformation, Counter-Reformation and the Tolerance time, spread mainly by miners in the 15th century. For almost 200 years the Lutheran faith was taught secretly, and still to this day, the majority of the population are Protestant. **(39)**

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Picture 37 | Postcard from 1916
Picture 38 | Photography in 2014

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Picture 39 | The construction of the Protestant Church 1895

Picture 40 | Friedrich Simony, Das Dachsteingebiet 1895

Picture 41 | Summer festival at the Kulmwirt (oldest restaurant in town) 1926 & locals riding their first bike in 1928

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Picture 42 | Summer Sport Activities
Picture 43 | Winter Sport Activities & Promotional poster

Picture 44 | Construction of the cable car in 1969
Picture 45 | Sky Walk, Dachstein
Picture 46 | Ice palace, Dachstein
Picture 47 | Suspension bridge, Dachstein

The discovery of the Alps is fostered by the exploits of climbers and the descriptions of novelists and scientist, such as Friedrich Simony **(40)**, since the end of the 18th century. Besides the attention to the scenic sights by mountain enthusiasts, tourism had its first upturn as a typical summer resort, as members of the church as well as people all around Austria came to visit the place surrounded by magnificent mountains. When the railway station in Schladming (700 meter above sea level) was built and the connecting road to Ramsau am Dachstein was opened in 1910, more tourists were able to visit the Alpine region and the foundation for leisure and recreation activities was built.

Since then, a year-round program on three levels is guaranteed: at 1100 meter, 1700 meter and right on the glacier at 2700 meter. Ramsau am Dachstein offers many hiking and Nordic walking trails, climbing routes, horse riding paths, mountain-biking tracks, lakes for swimming, and above all magnificent view points and numerous huts with local food. It is also an ideal skiing area with panoramic ski slopes and cross country trails during the winter season. In addition to its tourist benefits, Ramsau am Dachstein has established itself as world renowned sports organizer.[41] **(41-43)**

3.1.1 ARCHITECTURAL INTERVENTION IN 2700 METER HEIGHT

Since 1969 the Dachstein Mountain could be reached by car and a subsequent cable car. **(44)** The year-round skiing area provides ski slopes, cross country trails, glacier hiking trails, a snow park , a panoramic restaurant and meanwhile architectural interventions such as an observation platform called the *Balcony of the Alps*. **(45)** A visit to this high-altitude, glass-bottomed walkway is a great way to experience a 360° panorama to the Triglav mountain of Slovenia in the south and to the Czech Republic in the north.

Besides the Sky Walk there are other sensations, such as the highest situated ice palace **(46)** in Austria, with giant ice sculptures as well as a suspension bridge **(47)** including 14 steps from the platform to a glass balcony. In 1998 the Hohe Dachstein, 2996 meter, the highest mountain in Styria, was declared as UNESCO World Heritage.[42]

[41] Ramsau Dachstein. 2014 & Employees at the Tourism Office Ramsau am Dachstein 2014

[42] Ramsau Dachstein. 2014 & Employees at the Tourism Office Ramsau am Dachstein 2014

3.1.2 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The height of the mountains and the thereby linked typography and climate of the area led to a variety of possibilities for the development of tourism. The great diversity offers countless sport activities in winter and summer alike, all linked to a magnificent landscape experience.

As a corporate strategy, Ramsau am Dachstein is pursuing a sustainable tourism development by strengthening the market while using local and regional resources as well as implementing a balance between environment and economy. Most important are the natural resources of the Alps, such as mineral water, fresh air with specific additives, healthy local food and rare animal and plant species as well as glaciers and waterfalls. Furthermore, also the cultural heritage is relevant for the tourism. A positive development towards *farm holiday* **(48)** has begun generating an additional source of income for farmers with their family run enterprises.

Picture 48 | Farmers in 1903

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In this context, the strong regional embedding which enables tourists to spend interesting and valuable holidays on the farm, plays an important role.

Nowadays, Ramsau am Dachstein is recorded with the most certified organic farms in an Austrian community. It guides tourists closer to nature and involves them in the actions connected with their conservation and landscape management. In return, tourists bring direct income to farmers and allow them to diversify their economic activities. Another positive effect is that farm tourism builds on existing infrastructures and helps distribute tourism more evenly in rural areas.

In conclusion, Ramsau am Dachstein offers a type of tourism closely connected to agriculture, sport activities and the countryside. Today one can witness that Ramsau am Dachstein tries to maintain both, local and regional assets; on one hand, nature or food based tourism, and on the other hand, tourist offers that are created in answer to the global trend such as sport or event based tourism.[43]

[43] Ramsau Dachstein. 2014 & Employees at the Tourism Office Ramsau am Dachstein 2014

3.2 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The case study is an empirical enquiry with an explorative approach and was used as a guideline for the investigation of the towns tourism practices. The practically-based data collection approach created the foundation for gaining useful information through exploring, describing and explaining the key factors. This information is documented in three different ways:

Photographs
Individual notes
Interviews with professionals, locals and tourists

While observing the place before conducting the interviews, the question of why this place is significant gained in importance. This observational investigation was essential to document the current use of the plateau. However, individual notes and interviews with professionals working in the field of tourism and non-professionals contribute reliable information to the observational research.
Even though the case study is the most suitable approach to analyze the place, the method includes some disadvantages which must be considered beforehand. The results only apply to this case and cannot be transferred to other cases. Nevertheless, the case study research method contains also valuable advantages, which were required for this approach. The method allows the designer, instead of generalizing the results and compromising on quantitative information only, to exemplify certain circumstances in depth. Due to its individuality, the case is a credible and accurate example with high validation.

3.3 OBSERVATIONAL AND VISUAL REAEARCH

The observational and visual research of the plateau was important to gain a first impression of the area, the setting and the environment of the place. In combination with the literature review, the collection of individual notes and photographs were useful to further develop the study.
The visual documentary describes the status quo at the place. The photos clearly show the different atmosphere of the place during different seasons. The exceptionally clean air and the gentle climate conditions with an annual average of snowfall of 5000 millimeter, together with an extraordinary landscape diversity, these have all represented positive arguments to assign the town climatic health resort in 2004.







Picture 49 | Observational and visual research
August 2014

Picture 49 | Observational and visual research
February 2014

3.4 INTERVIEWS

3.4.1 EXPERT INTERVIEWS

Expert interviews are defined as a qualitative research method and the most important source of information, which was achieved with the help of professionals. In this context of the study, the expert interviews provided the possibility to gain insightful and precise information concerning the development practices within the field of tourism. Therefore, experts were chosen according to their knowledge, experience and contribution to the study. The experts represent different stakeholders; (1) the manager of the tourism organization, (2) one marketing specialist, (3) the CEO of the local bank, (4) one employee from the local transport service, (5) one PR and Sales specialist and (6) one employee at the municipality (regional planning office). In total six face-to-face interviews were conducted. This diversity of experts enables a view from different points and covers a large field of expertise. The short introduction and description below provides an overview of all expert participants.

(1) ELIAS WALSER

The manager of the tourism organization proves to be open about implementations of short- and long-term strategies in order to enhance the towns unique values. According to Elias Walser, it is *`important to stage the scenery and to emphasize the features the sunny plateau of Ramsau am Dachstein can offer.`* The town is focusing more on the *`physically active guest`* who is coming to 80% from Austria and Germany, whereas the other 20% are from Czech and the Benelux Union. *`60% of our guest are coming more than once.`*[44]

(2) PHILIPP WALCHER

A marketing specialist who works as a team leader for the company´s own event organization program is responsible for designing, creating and delivering marketing programs to support the expansion of company services. He is an expert in acquiring sponsors, either from the private sector or public institutions, such as the National Tourism Organization *Österreich Werbung*. The *Österreich Werbung* is focusing on the brand *Holidays in Austria* in order to awaken the desire for inspiration and personal development for future target groups. As a marketing strategy, Philipp Walcher, suggests to *`promote the intervention by talking to people face-to-face`*[45] besides using social media channels.

[44] Walser, E. 2014
[45] Walcher, P. 2014

(3) HEINZ WALCHER

The CEO of the local bank operates in the entire region of the Enns and Palten Valley. He has an excellent understanding to prepare the basis for strategic investment decisions and why it is important to reinforce the tourism and the qualities of rural areas. *`More people are wandering into the city, that is why we have to support the countryside even more.`*[46]

(4) ALFRED MAYER

An employee at the regional transport service works simultaneously as a bus driver while he is in charge of supervising personnel and customer service operations. Measuring service performances concerning the experience and comfort for tourists is necessary to identify problems and create solutions. *`We have to get more people to ride the bus, since 85% are still driving their own car.`*[47]

(5) MARKUS ZEIRINGER

Markus Zeiringer is an PR and Sales specialist for the Planai - Hochwurzen - Bahnen GmbH and responsible for the intervention *Sky Walk* on top of the Dachstein Mountain. His duty is to communicate with the public on behalf of companies, organizations or governments and to spread messages to the public, often using the media as a channel.[48]

(6) MICHAEL PUKL

In charge of all the structural measures in Ramsau am Dachstein his valuable contribution to the positive impact of the townscape is significant. Starting from the existing conditions, it is his responsibility to ensure the sustainable and optimal use and conservation of the environment as well as to pay attention to the economic, social and cultural needs of the society. Talking about the intervention, he mentioned that it is *`important to align the infrastructure in a way that highlights the striking features of the landscape`*[49] and that the designer has to consider a view facts beforehand, such as the reclassification of the land use.

[46] Walcher, H. 2014
[47] Mayer, A. 2014
[48] Zeiringer, M. 2014
[49] Pukl, M. 2014

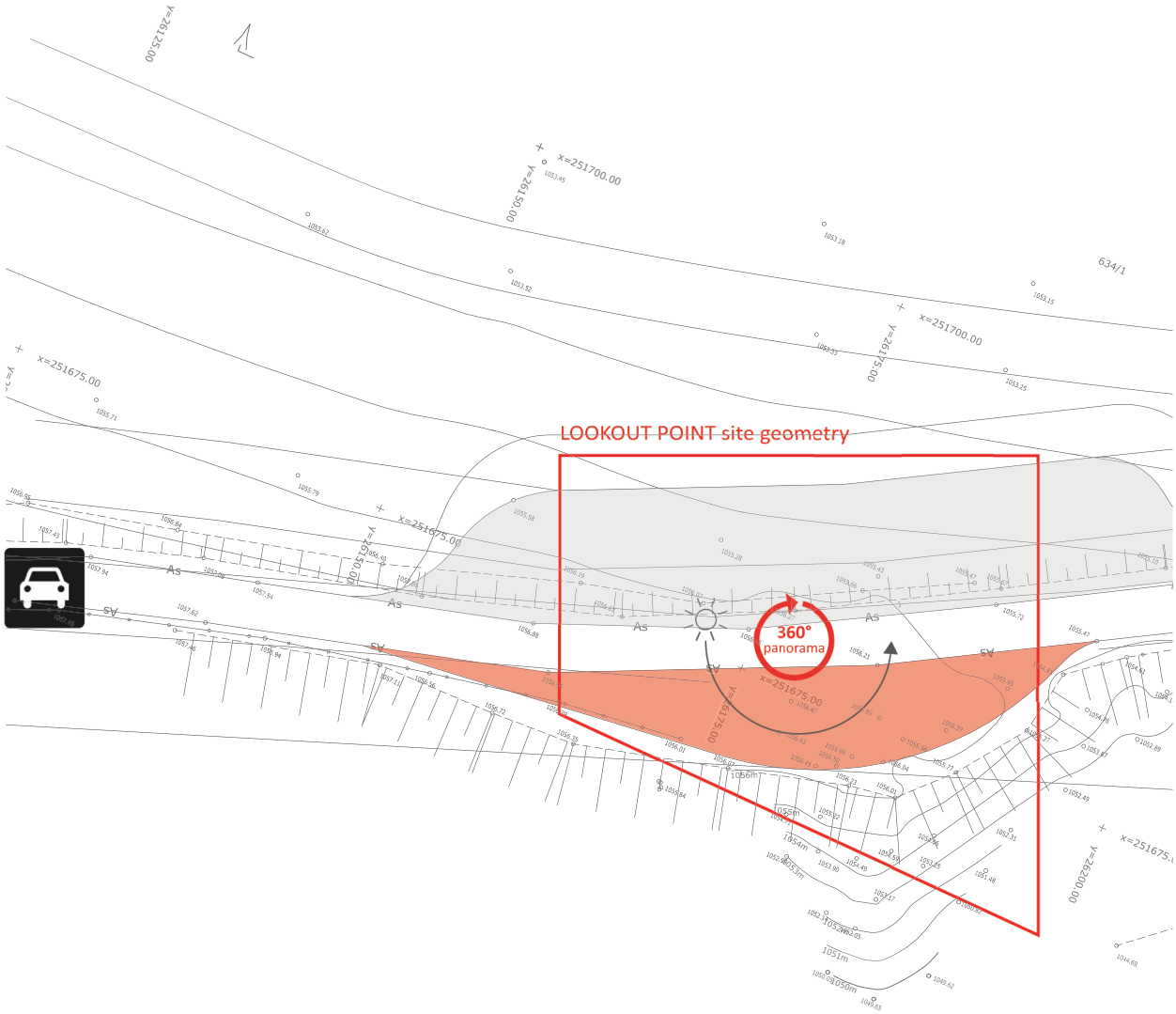


Figure 3 | Access and connections around the site

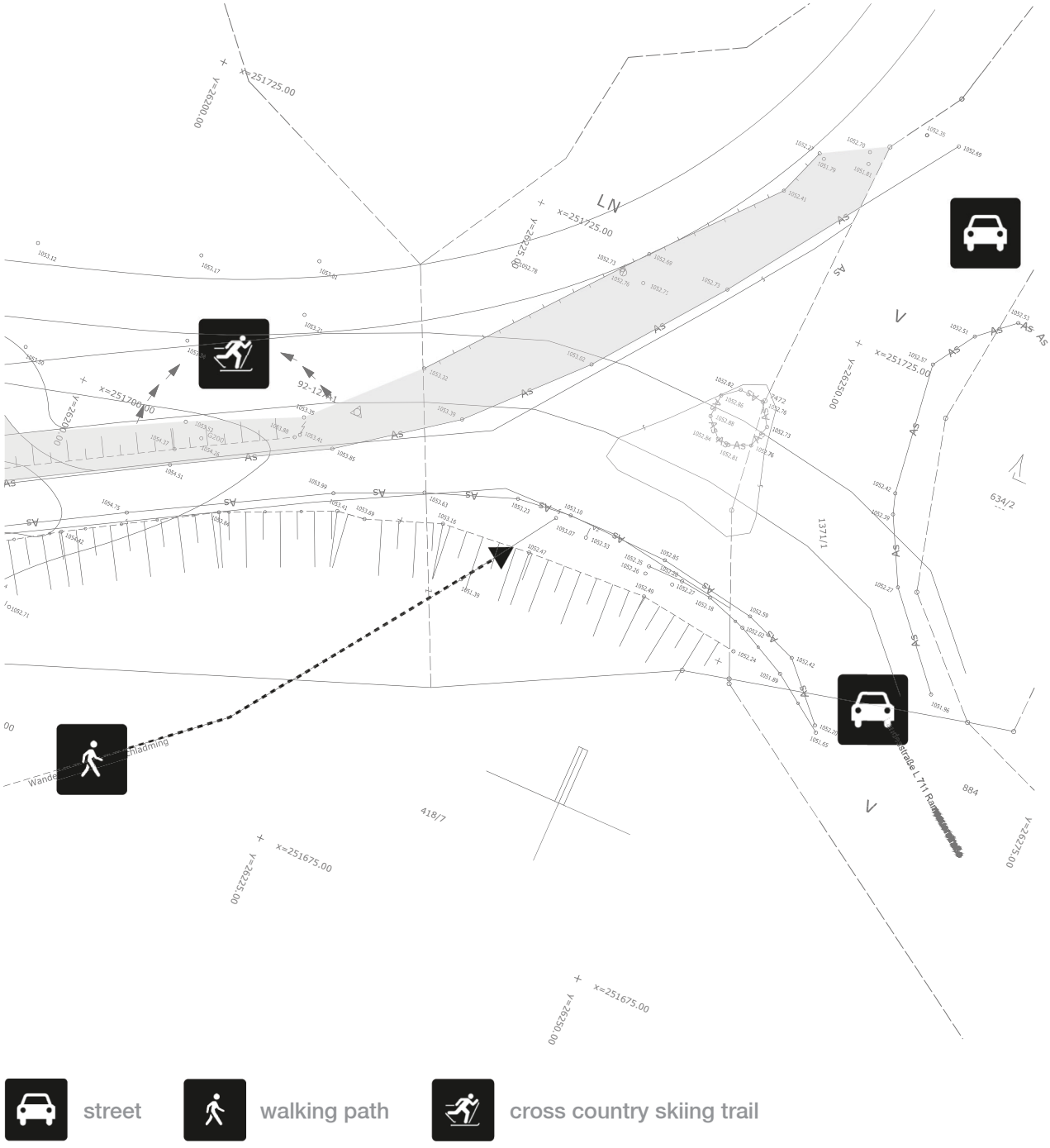


Figure 3 | Access and connections around the site

3.4.2 TOURIST INTERVIEWS

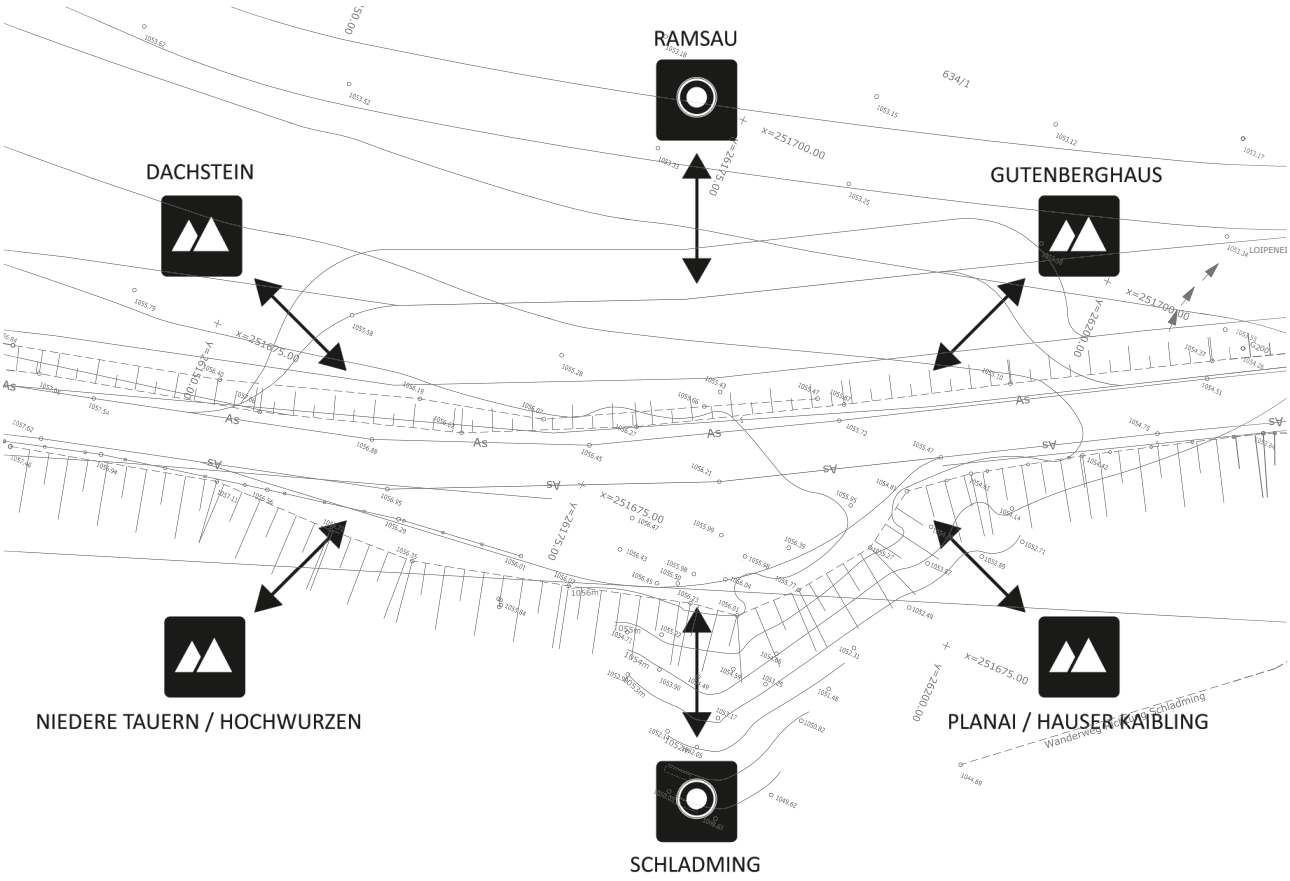
The plateau is the perfect starting point for stunning walks at the foot of the Dachstein Mountain along Alpine creeks and lush green meadows. A total of 200 kilometer of tracks are mostly organized as round paths and perfectly signposted. The place is easily accessible by car or foot along several well-maintained roads, providing access to the city of Schladming and the center of Ramsau am Dachstein. (Figure 3)

The tourism organization is already providing seating furniture - two benches - which are located rigth at the edge of the plateau, with a *`stunning outlook into the nature of Austria.`*[50]

At first sight, one might ask why the investigation is of highly importance, since lookout points exist in many places. Nevertheless, the aim was to illuminate why other places are not equally attractive for tourists. The interviews revealed that the place in particular is *`a plateau, where you have a perfect view into the urban area of Schladming and at the same time into the Tauern Mountain area.`*[51] as described by Nathalie and Florian, two tourists from Germany. (Figure 4)

A lot of tourists enumerate the following reason for the uniqueness of the place. *`It allows you access to a grassy area right next to the road, where you get the most incredible views.`* Compared to other places, this plateau is less exposed to demanding requirements and therefore accessible for all age groups.

Figure 4 | Points of Interest



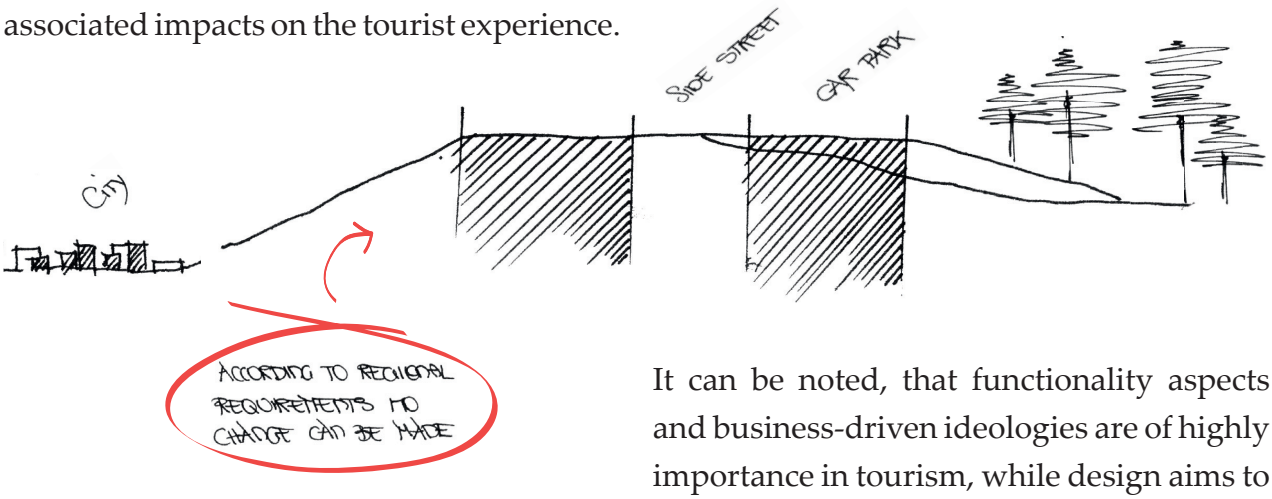
[50] Johanna, S. 2014

[51] Nathalie, B. & Florian, K. 2014

Additionally, by asking to what extend an architectural intervention would be beneficial, one can witness, that people do not talk immediately about physical design. Their focus is much more on the ways in which the place and their presence influence each other.

3.5 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

What was emerging from the case study was their constraints or limits, such as regional urban planning restrictions, traffic regulations, environmental impact and associated impacts on the tourist experience.



Nevertheless, the new tourism development concept, mentioned in the introduction, includes the following additional factors, which are important for the subsequent design development:

Creation of a competitive advantage based on high attractiveness, innovation and a high quality of tourist offers, using the key inidicators of the town.

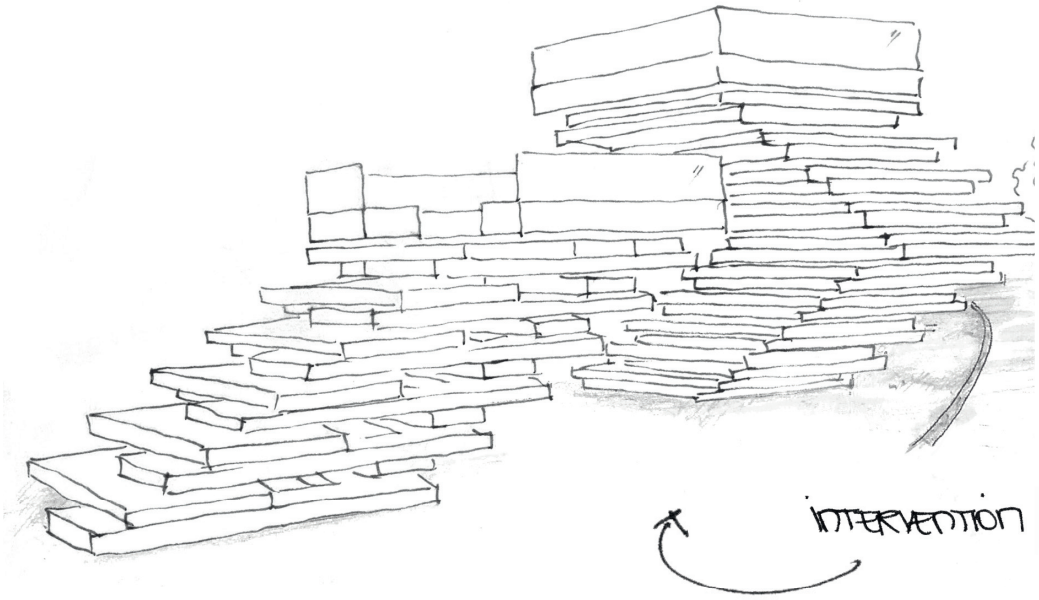
Social and economic sustainable development of the chosen place with respect to natural resources and the cultural environment.

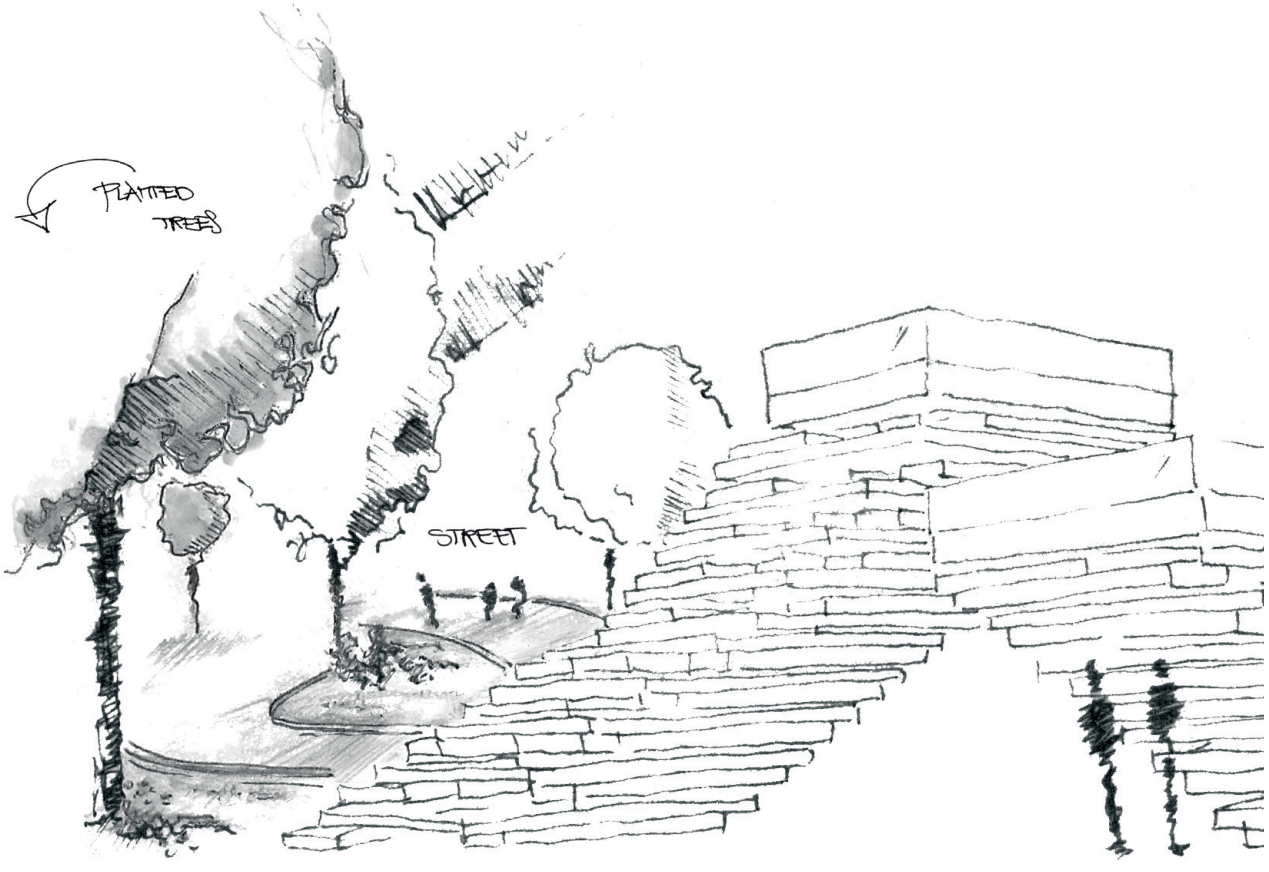
Improvment of availability of tourist offers, particularly through communication and information, integrating local communities and networks.

Connection of existing offers and broadening the knowledge about their meaning, as well as the improvement of a regional and internal identity.

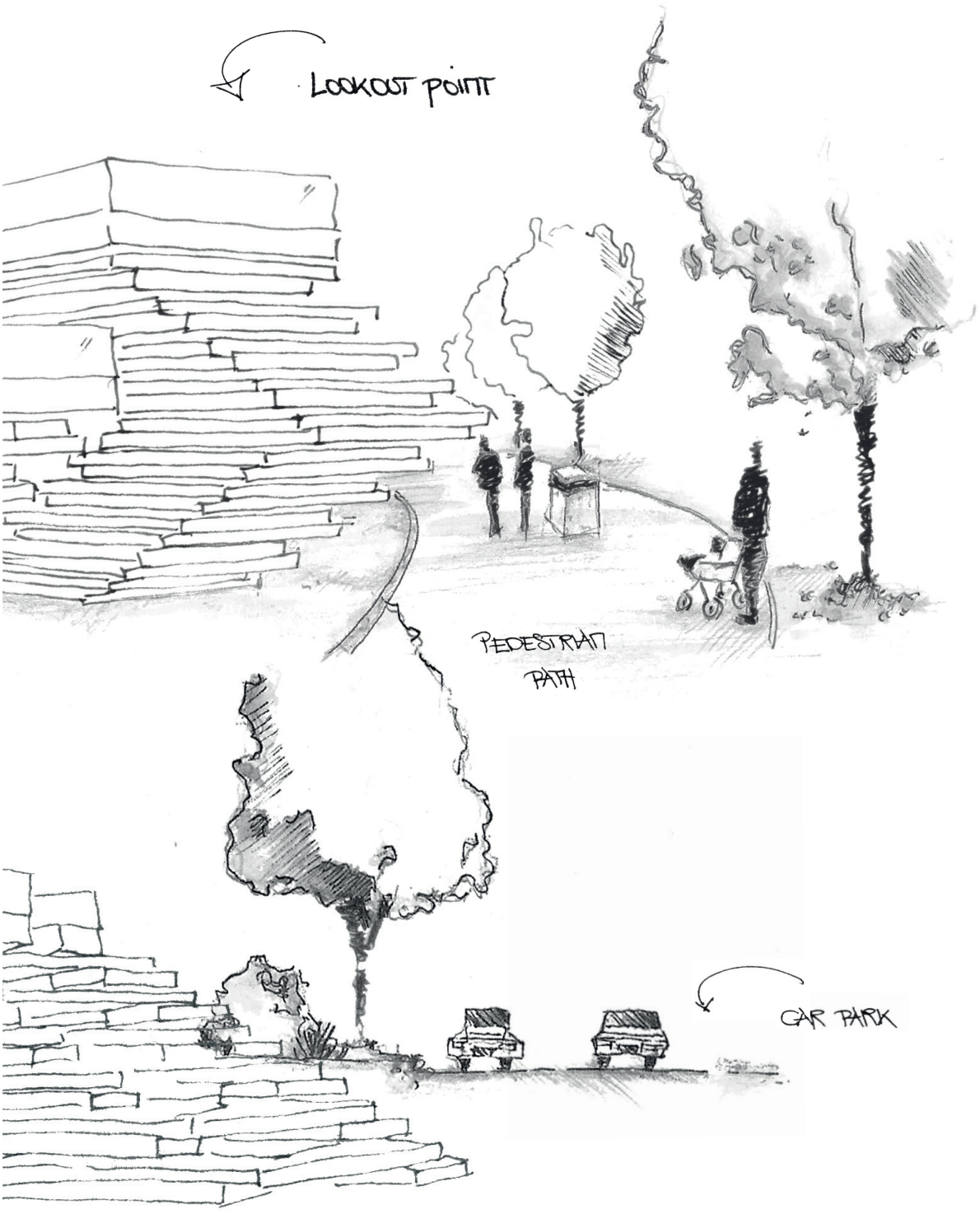
It can be noted, that functionality aspects and business-driven ideologies are of highly importance in tourism, while design aims to involve design-driven solutions and user-experiences. The process is enduring and the final solution is always a compromise between regional requirements, design and functionality. However, due to the two oppositional aspects, the intuition that the interventions should carry a solution to support the corporate identity of the place and visualize the town´s values is confirmed. In other words, *`in this environment, design can be integrated to a certain extent as long as it suits the concept of tourism.`*[52]

[52] Walser, E. 2014





Sketch



Sketch

4.
SOLUTION PROPOSAL

4.1 OBJECTIVE

In order to further improve the development of tourism, this section describes a solution proposal that is based on the results of the case study analysis. Since the tourism is known for being challenging, collaboration becomes essential. Especially the interviews with professionals in this field illustrate the issue of the complexity of the decision-making processes. Although it initially appeared difficult to change locals conservative thinking, most of them stated that *`we can identify with the traditional [...] even with something new as long as it is real and genuine.`*[53] In most cases new adjustments were preferred to the already existing foundation.

The proposal, described below, offers a solution to the existing lack of visibility. The solution focuses on the first step of improvement of staging the scenery. The second step would be to use the intervention as a communication channel for the towns unique values, while focusing on the diversity of activities for tourists. To deepen the appreciation of a high quality built environment from a more expanded perspective and how to create a unique experience through design that contributes to a dialogue between culture and nature will be one of the main focus of this intervention.

The Alps are seen as a platform for innovation in the field of tourism, while mainly promoting environmental and resource conservation based on geological specificities. But it also comprises a whole concept of space, like history, cuisine, arts - all characteristics that contribute to a sense of place. Therefore, the intervention should have *meeting the other* as an important agenda, in order to attain special meaning with social interactions being integrated. Such interactions may be between tourists and other tourists and between tourists and locals, the latter providing much of the social and cultural furniture of the place. As Larsen et al. suggests, *`tourism is increasingly concerned with making connections [...] [rather] than escape from social relations.`*[54] Turning away from narrow definitions of tourism as sightseeing, navigation or information finding, this intervention seeks to emphasize the notion of sociability and place-making as essential components of tourism.

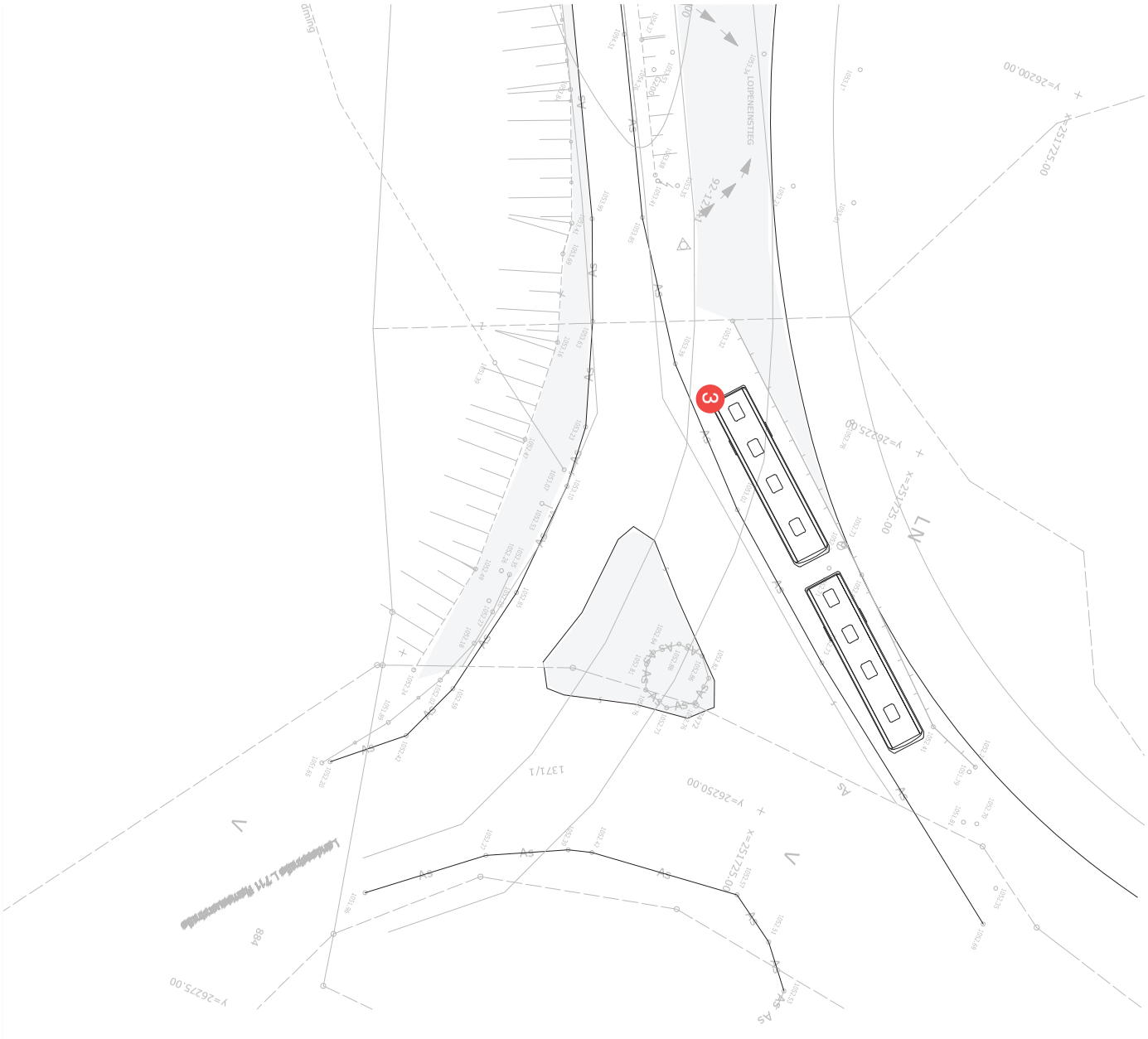
The intervention *am stein.* describes a design concept which takes you on a walk around a scenery and place. It should show how overlooked places can be rehabilitated.

[53] Locals of Ramsau am Dachstein 2014

[54] cited in Bodker, M. & Browing, D. 2013, p.20

Floor plan M 1.50

1 LOOKOUT POINT
2 PARKING LOT CAR
3 PARKING LOT BUS



Floor plan M 1.50

Landscape Ramsau am Dachstein

4.2 CONCEPT

4.2.1 THE INTERVENTION

The design is structured around the idea of an architectural intervention, explored in relationship to its duration and effects in and around the community where it takes places. In general, the approach of such interventions is related to the possibilities of architectural practices which conceive and articulate diverse processes of community development and transformation. It is rooted in an understanding of spatial conceptualization and production and includes the involvement with other authorities, which makes cultural appreciation and research essential.

The concept of design can arise, among others, from inspiring communication and community experiences to devising new means of gathering closely connected to the environment. Moreover, it aims at opening up rural places to the public, acting as catalysts for social, cultural and political

4.2.2 SCULPTURAL PHILOSOPHY

The natural environment of Ramsau am Dachstein, as described earlier, inspired the idea of completing the plateau with a basic geometric shape. The design derives from the terrace-shaped plateau, which is located at the bottom of the Dachstein Mountains.

As it occurred in the Enns Valley, those mountains and plateaus are formed through erosion, when rivers carved deep channels into the area. (Figure 5) Therefore the proposed intervention can be seen as a response to a natural structural form, created when the Earth´s tectonic plates move and are subjected to immense forces. Through the notion of the interplay between dynamic and static elements, the structure should create a relation that describes and magnify the unique spatiality of the plateau. Moreover, the design is founded in the idea to exist as an abstracted extension of the landscape.

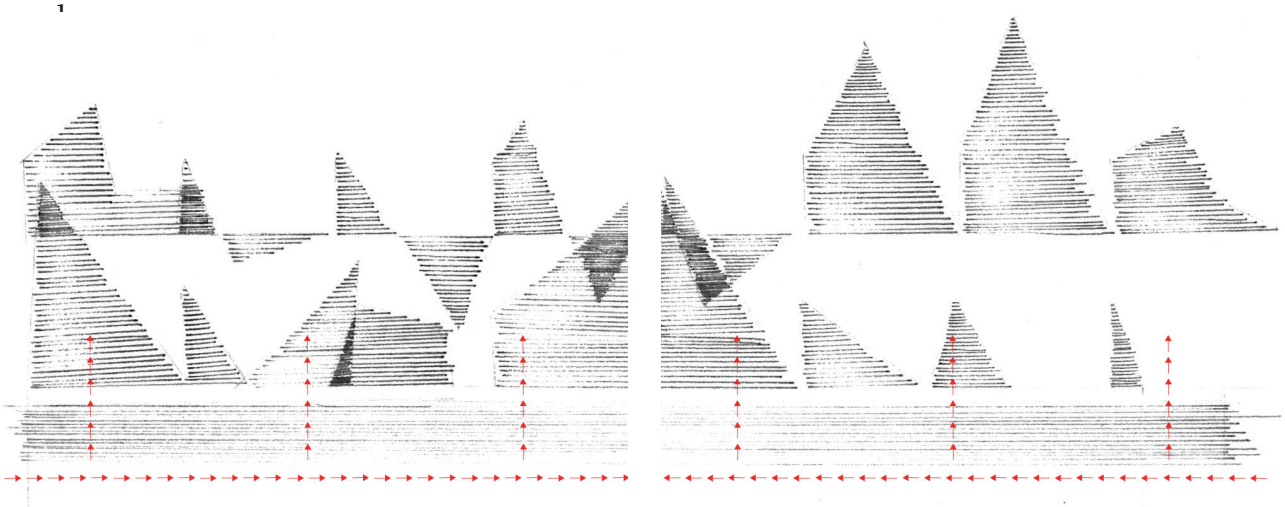


Figure 5 | Illustration how mountains are created

The structure is respectfully delicate, and was conceived as a thin thread that guides visitors to a stunning overlook. Simplicity, with a seemingly basic form that reveals itself as a thoughtful composition. By pushing the volume in opposite directions, the `flat` form becomes a functional object that is both consistent and diverse. (Figure 6: possible configurations) Additionally, narrow to wide slots frame an expansive view of the Alps, providing a scenery for quiet contemplation.

As a raised leisure area and connecting structure, it opens the plateau in vertical and diagonal directions, resonating with the surrounding and bringing the plateau into a whole. There are three main features of the intervention; (1) as a stage, (2) as a lookout point and (3) as a landmark.

The Dachstein Mountains consist mainly of different type of slate and lime. The flowing glacier water made its way through the permeable limestone, through cracks and crevices, and dug a much branched cave system. Therefore, when reaching the highest point of the intervention, a look into the inner core will be provided through a see-through glass platform.

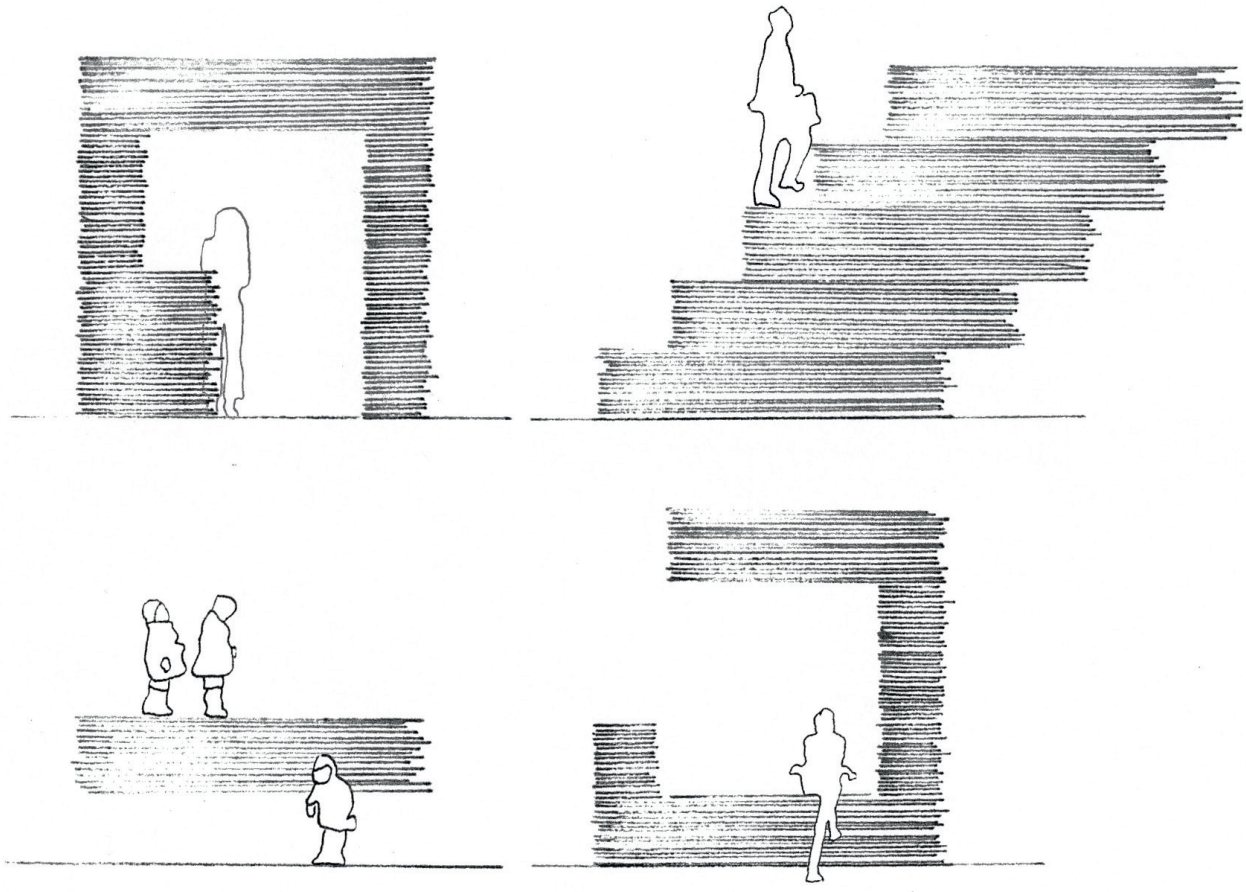
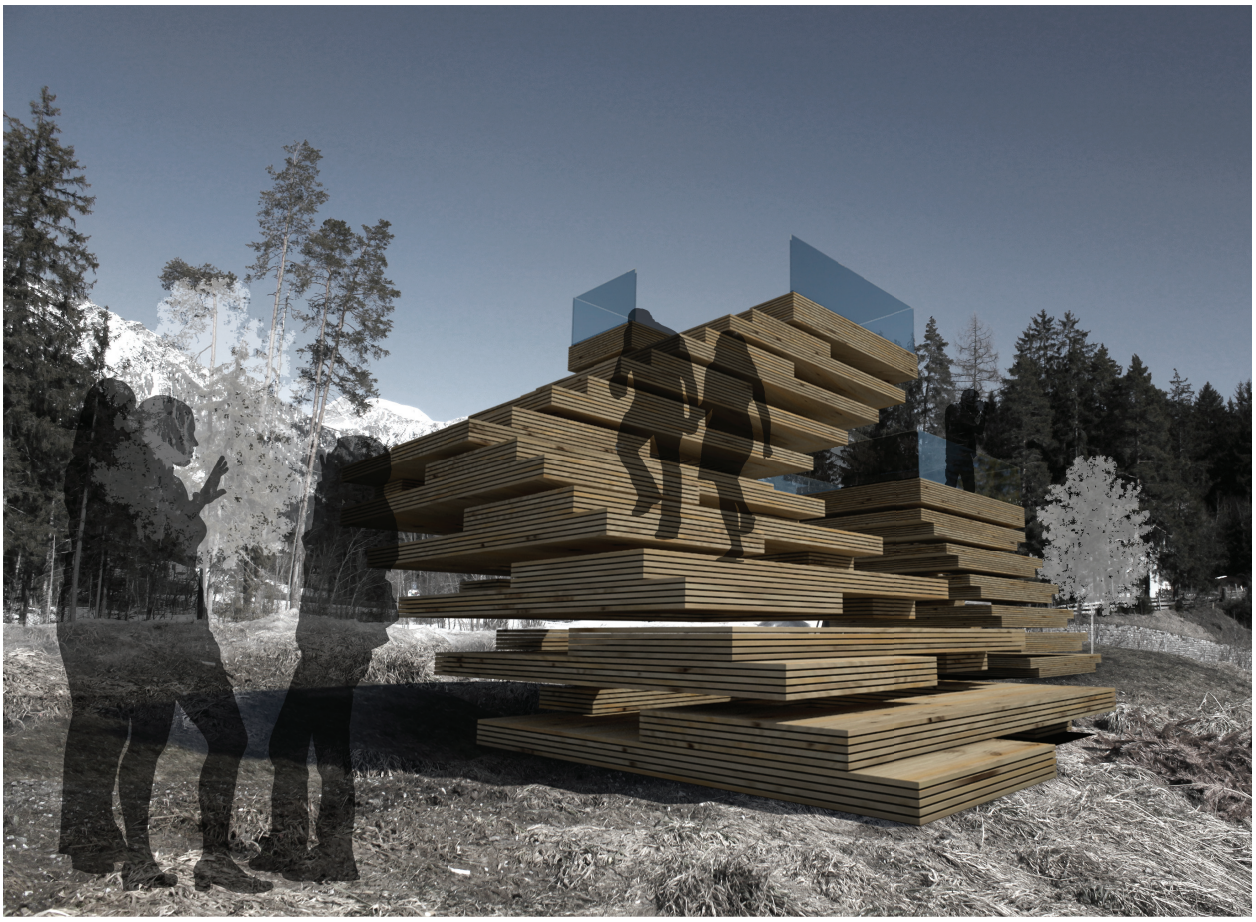
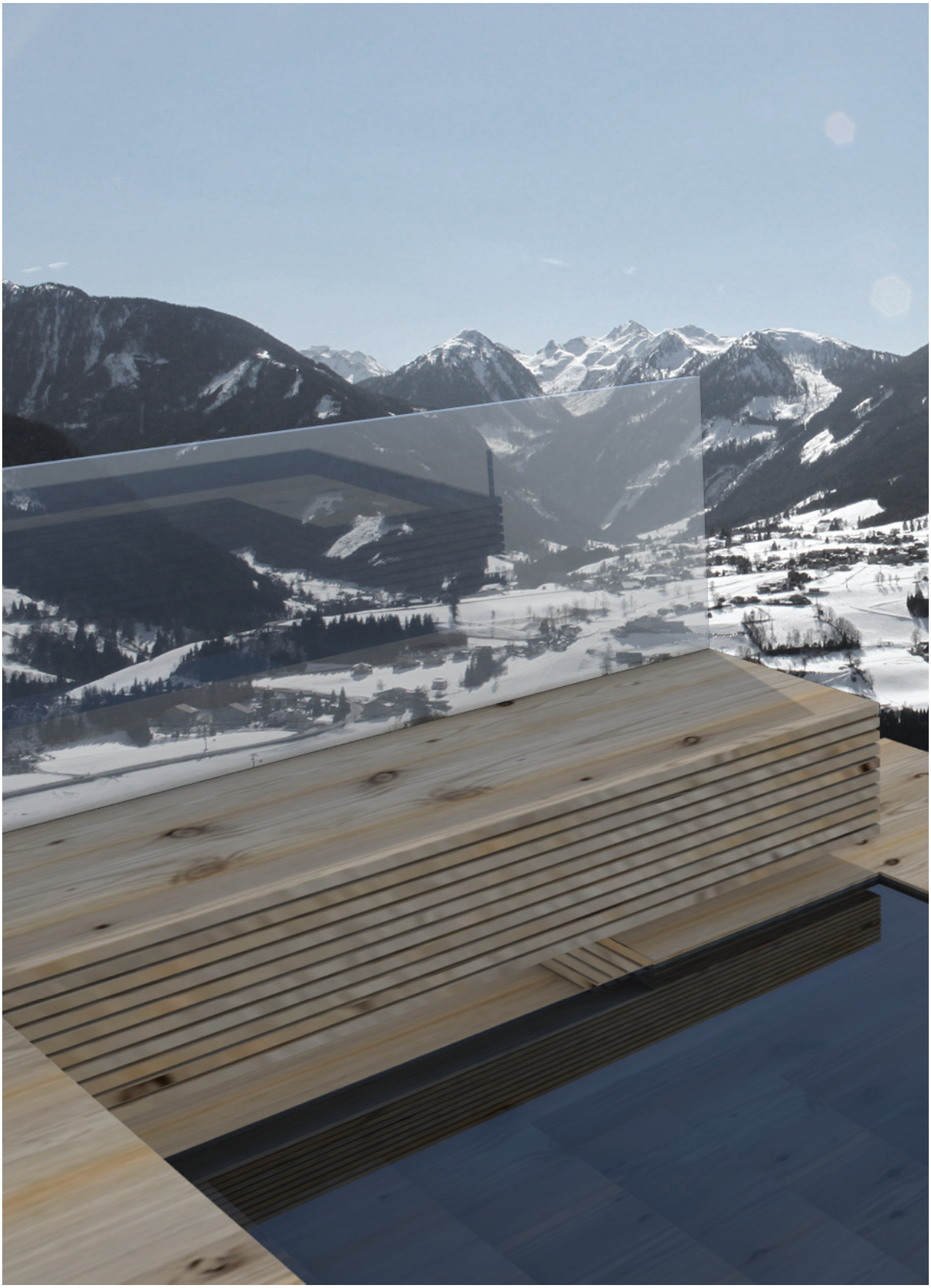


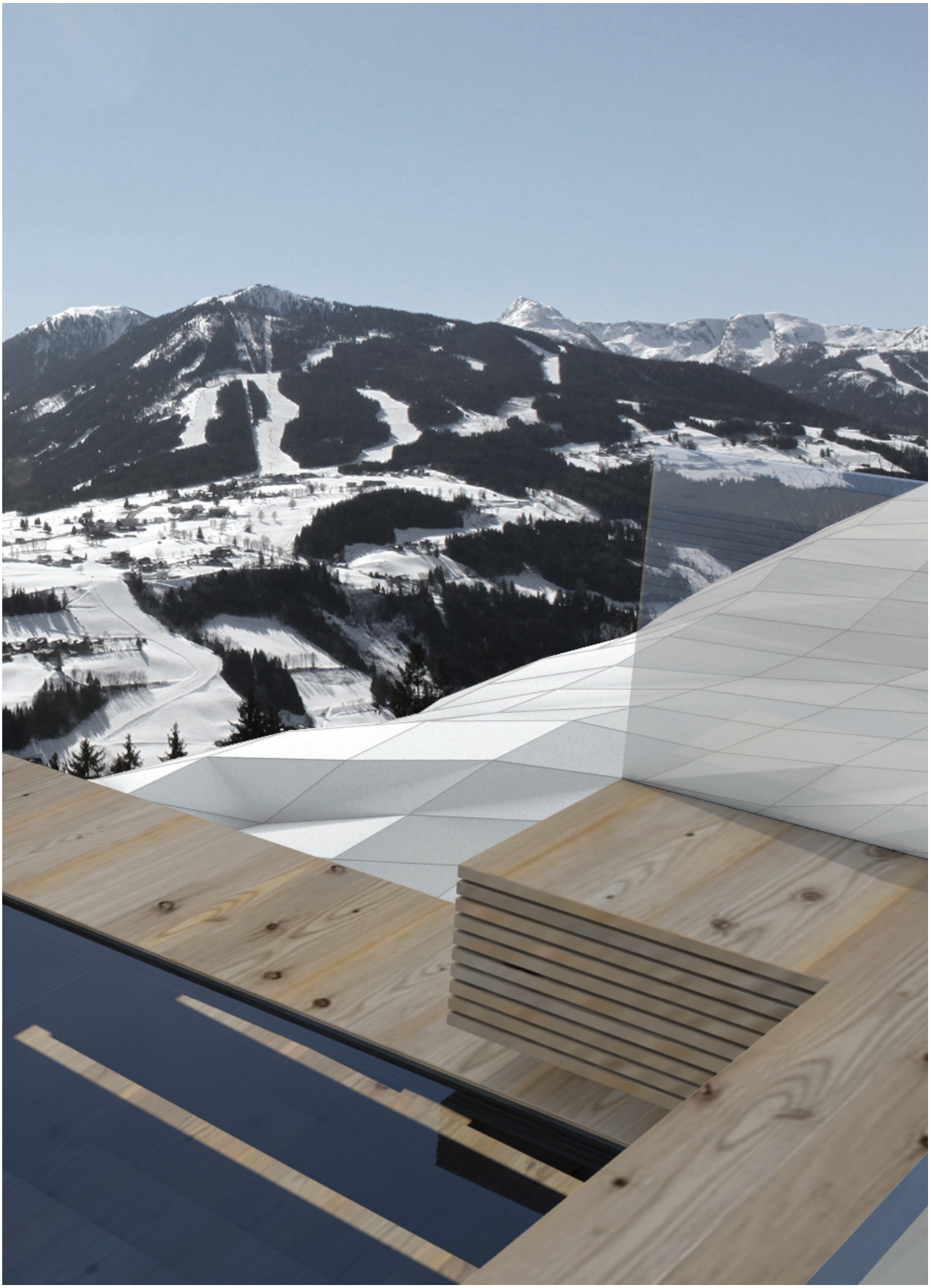
Figure 6 | Possible configurations



Visualisation

Visualisation





Visualisation

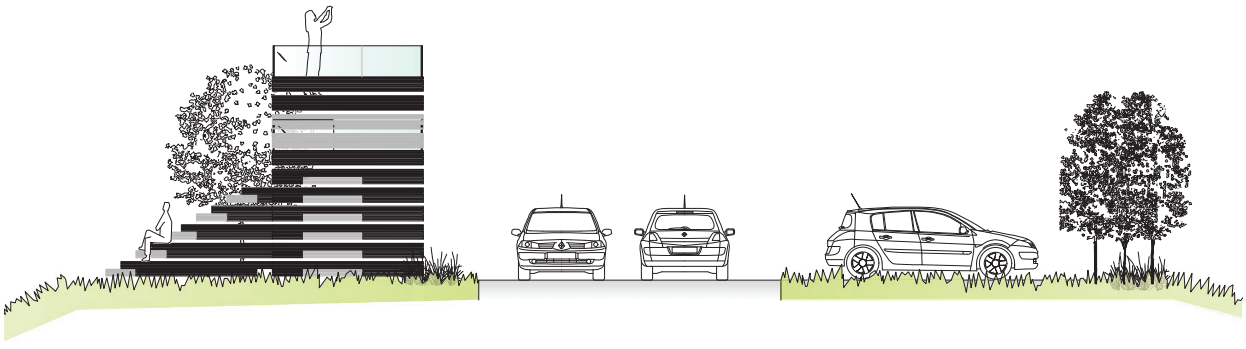
4.2.3 NATURAL LANDSCAPE

The landscaping is proposed as a support and causes an interplay between construction and landscape. The relation between delicate planted trees and the subtle but rigid structure makes an appealing and graceful contrast. The abundance of nature is always of highly importance to people and therefore the intervention will provide a pleasing experience and a higher perspective.

As for the plant species two native species were chosen:
* Larch trees, which are widespread in the area of Ramsau am Dachstein, and
* Maple trees, where most of them have been cut down and are now regarded unique.

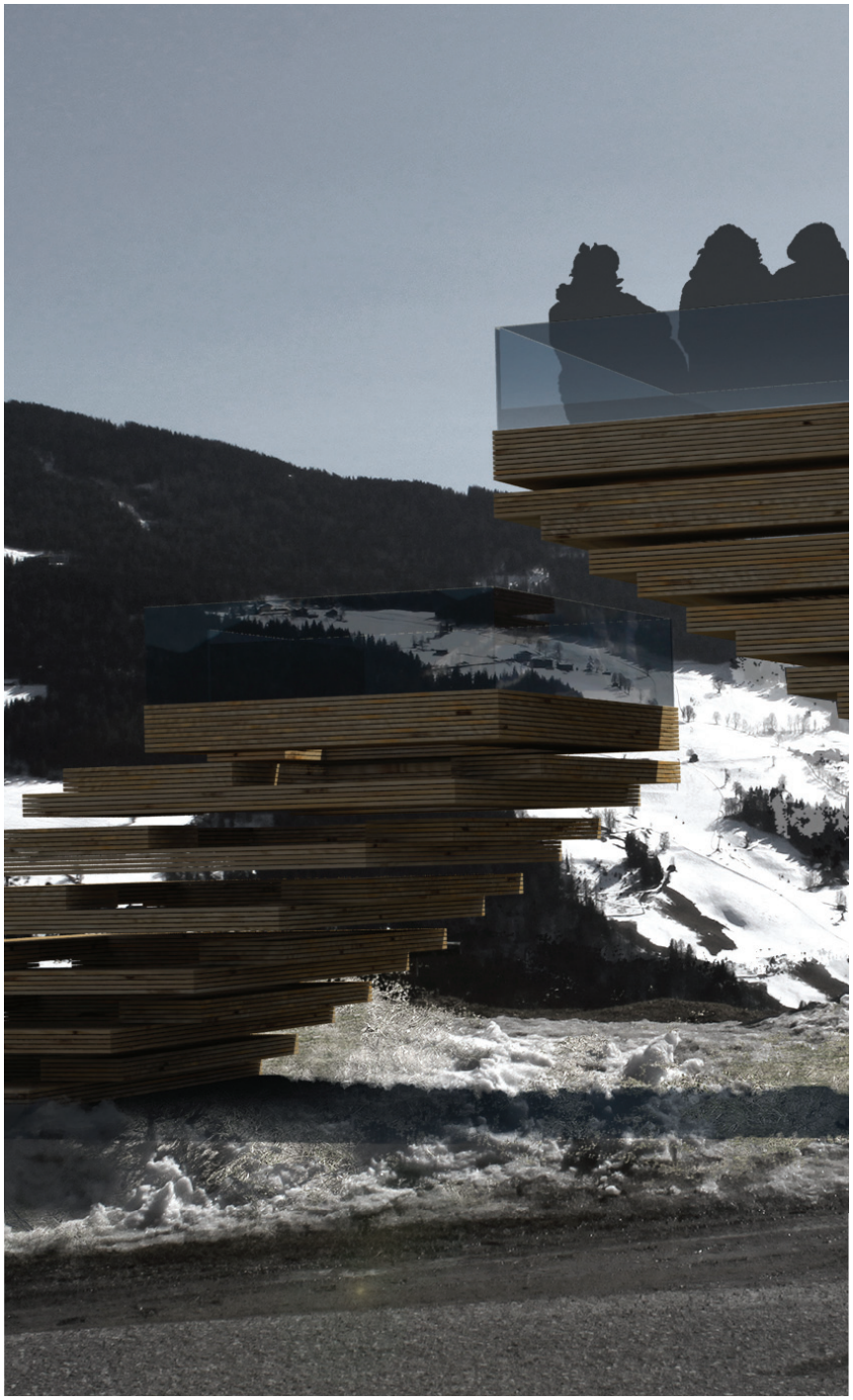
The landscape is designed by mixing hardscape and softscape, blending trees through pedestrians paths. For areas of solid and evergreen groundcover, shrub species are proposed, such as Gentian and the Alpine rose.

The car park will be located at the same level as the intervention, and will be recombined into the new landscape design. It is intended, that people who are passing by should be tempted to get out of their car and experience the landscape and connect with the changing natural environment.



Side view of the car park, street and intervention

Plant species Ramsau am Dachstein and
an example for mixing hardscape and softscape



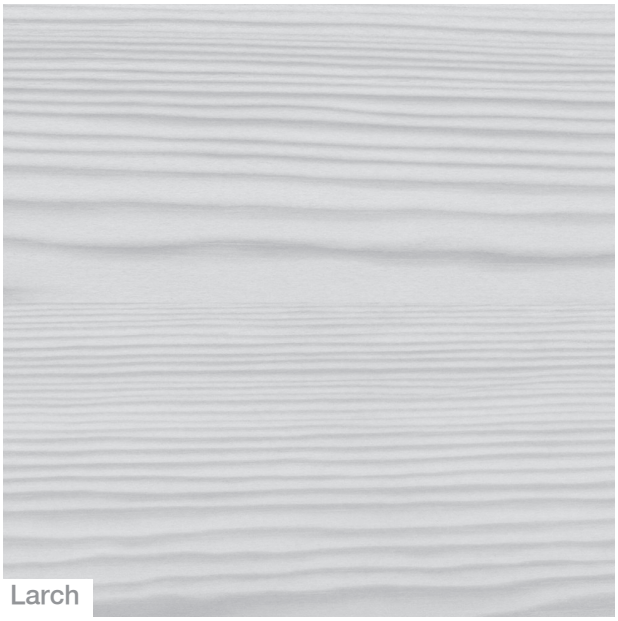
Visualisation

4.2.4 MATERIAL CHOICE

The intervention is a robust facility, dimensioned for durability with minimal maintenance and demands on static strength. The plateau is in constant motion, it revolves through day and night, passes below clouds and showers of rain and receives centimeters of snow during the winter season. However the contrast between the seasons has been handled with the choice of material, in order to withstand the changing weather conditions without comprising on the visual quality. Working with a resistant material felt therefore natural.


CLT

Timber is used as a natural material and to complement the surrounding landscape. It was chosen for the sustainable and functional qualifications, since it is easy and fast to assemble on site and simple to dismantle. With its patina the material will gain over time, the intervention is to be characterized by planned zones and the natural landscape.


Larch

The key component is the use of Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) panel technology as it is as strong as concrete but a fifth of the weight. A typical CLT structure is significantly cheaper than concrete alternatives with the main savings being made in the construction phase itself. By stacking and rotating 20 millimeter CLT panels, the structure reaches its height and creates treads. (Figure 7: CLT panel as repeating structure)

Furthermore, a CLT structure will require significantly less energy to manufacture that a concrete building. For every 1000m² building built in CLT instead of concrete, up to 350t of CO2 is saved. Therefore the main structure of the intervention is formed from CLT panes cut to shape and laid onto the steel construction, which will provide the key stability for the structure and handle the tensile forces in different directions.

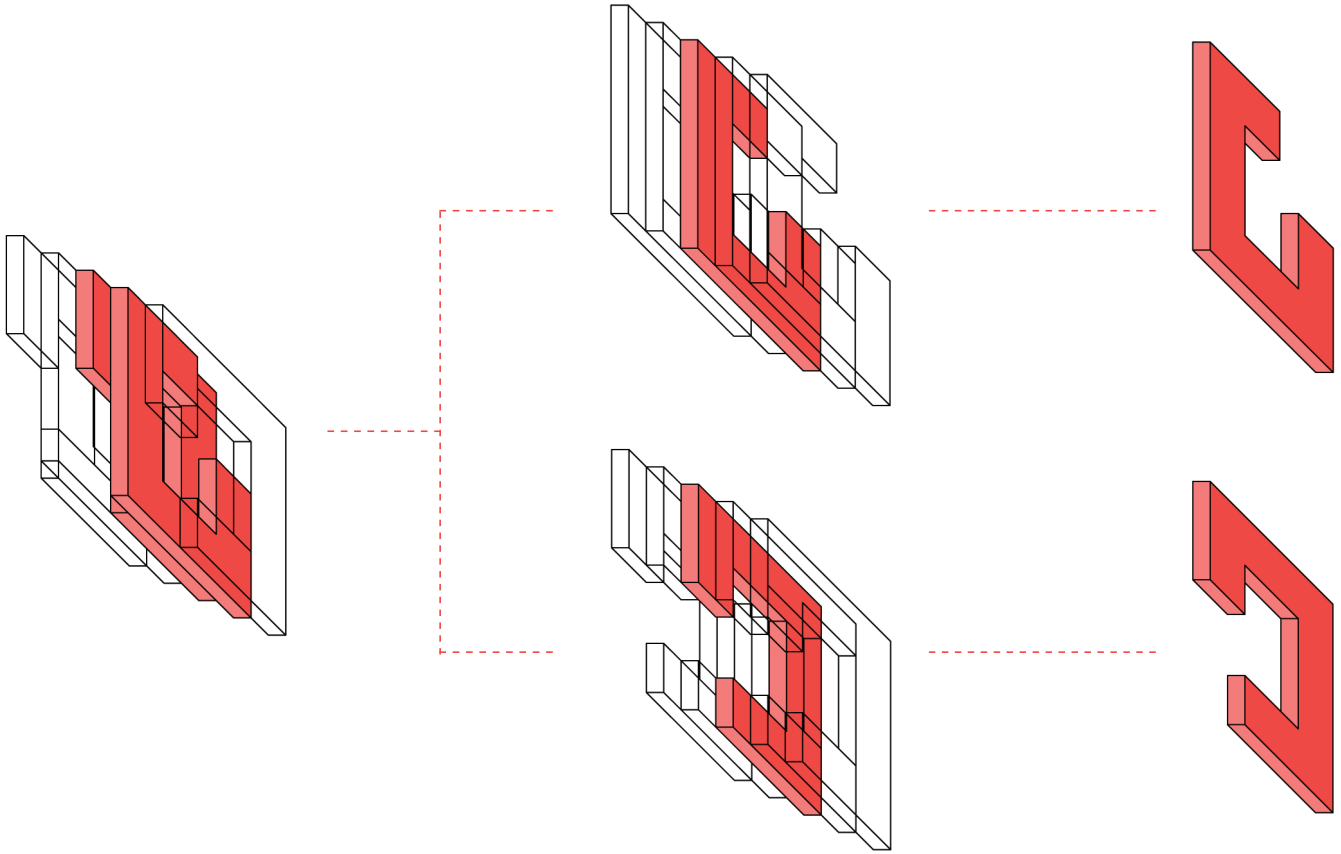


Figure 7 | CLT panel as repeating structure

4.2.5 LIGHTING PROPOSAL

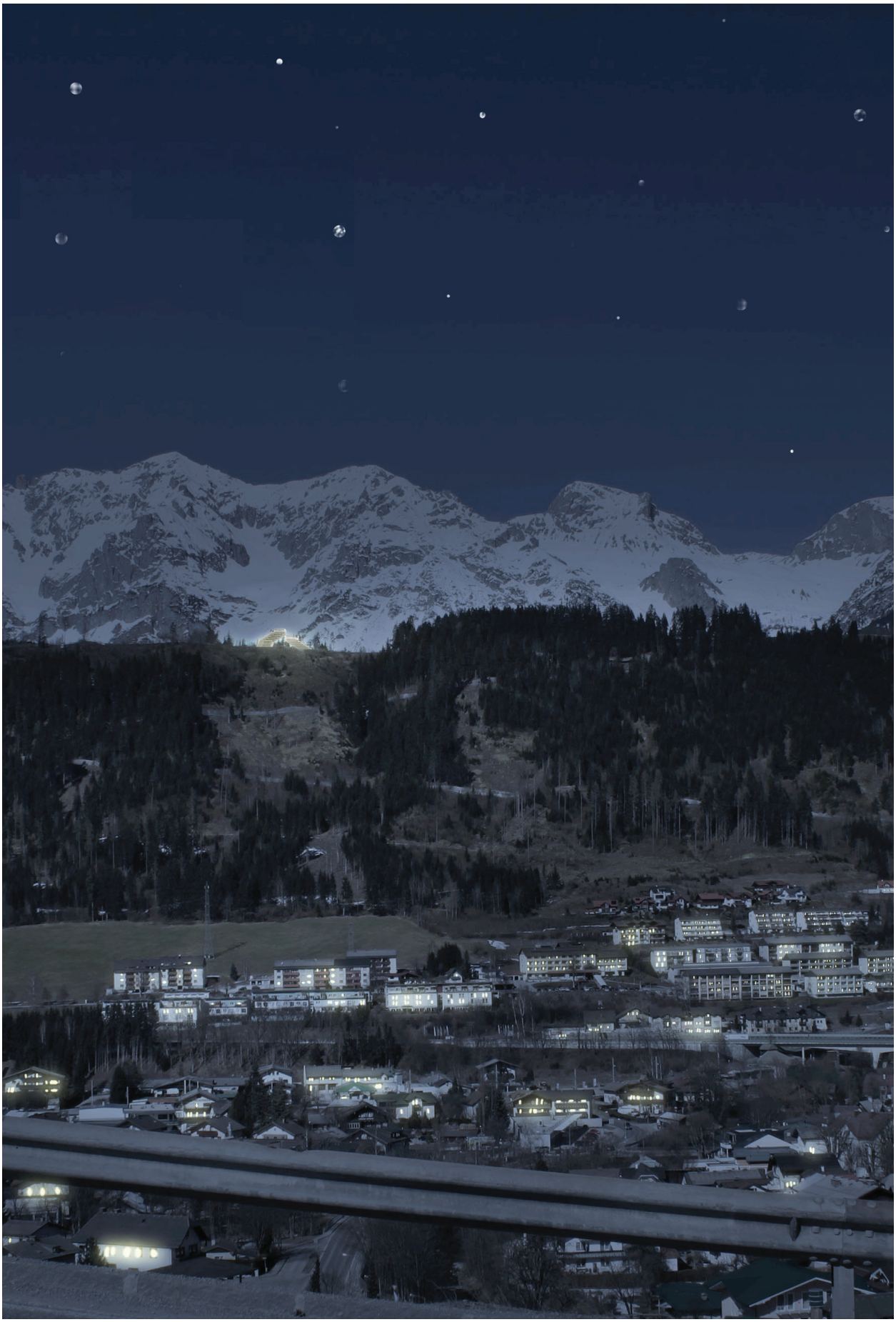
Solar-powered LED lighting will be integrated into the landscape, where every tree can be illuminated from below. The intervention itself will be lit with a LED strip following the edges of the structure, in order to give the impression to hover above ground.

Additionally the LED CAPIXevolution system will transform the surface of the intervention into a play of colors and effects. Each CAPIX Pixel has integrated three RGB-LED´s, which makes it possible to shine even from greater distance. Besides, the CAPIX evolution system meets the requirements of nature conservancy and energy efficiency.

By illuminating the structure, new possibilities of staging will be created, not only for visitors, but also for people from afar. The aim to function as a landmark and therefore branding the town through outstanding architecture will be maintained.

example of a lighted tree

example of accent lighting

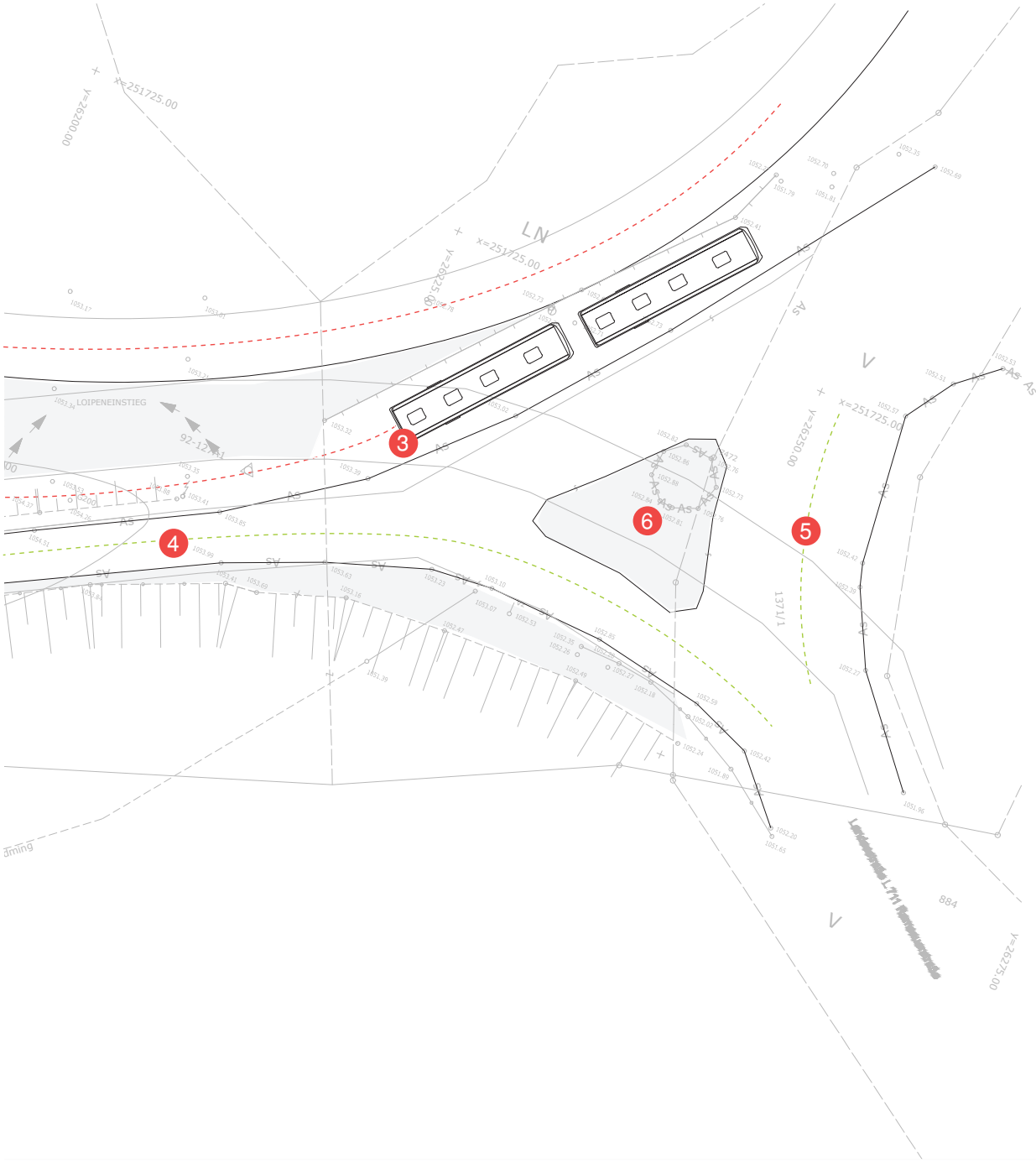


Visualisation

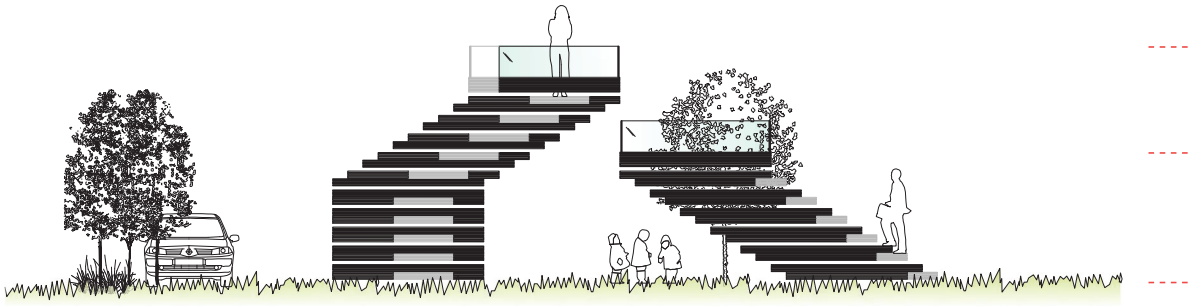
4.3 DESIGN VISUALIZATION & TECHNICAL DRAWINGS

Floor plan M 1.50

1 LOOKOUT POINT
2 PARKING LOT CAR
3 PARKING LOT BUS
4 SIDE STREET
5 MAIN STREET
6 TOURIST INFO
--- CIRCULATION
--- STREET



Floor plan M 1.50



LEVEL 2

Lookout
Platform

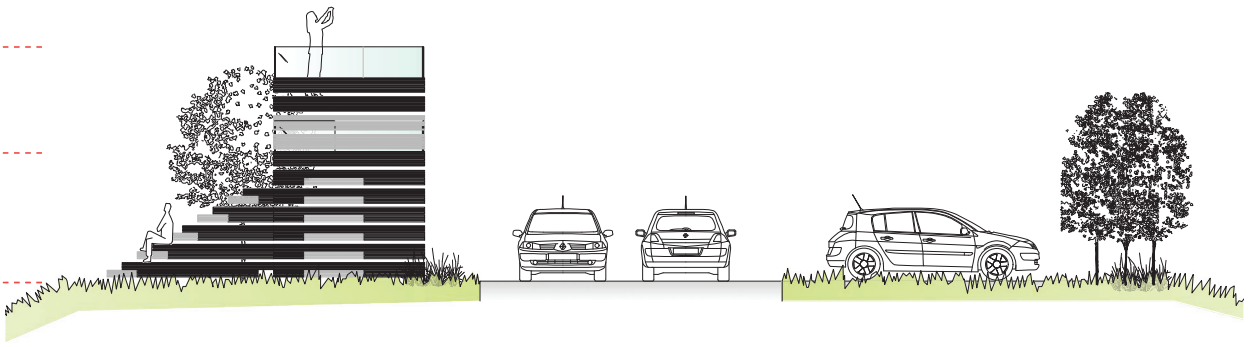
LEVEL 1

Stage
Stairs

LEVEL 0

Car park
Street
Access

Side and Front view M 1.20



LEVEL 2

Lookout
Platform

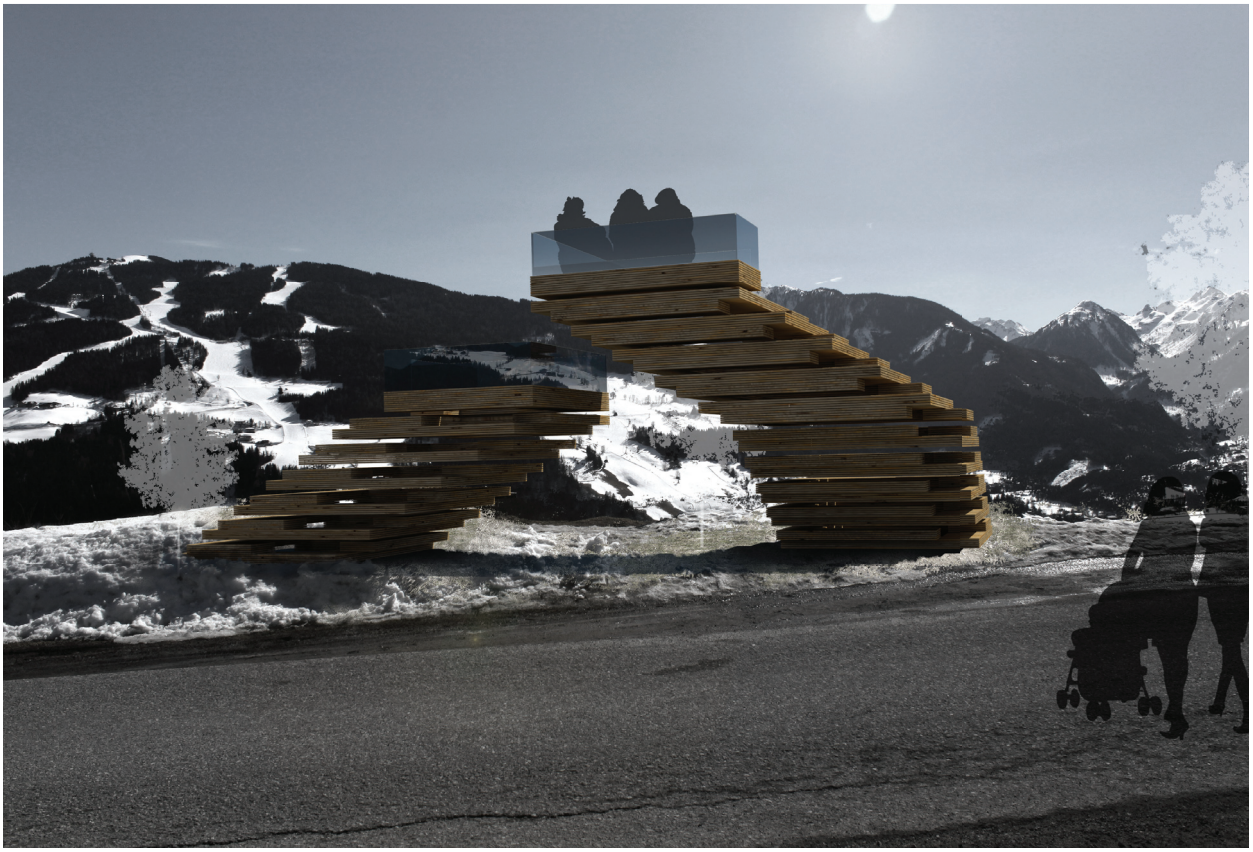
LEVEL 1

Stage
Stairs

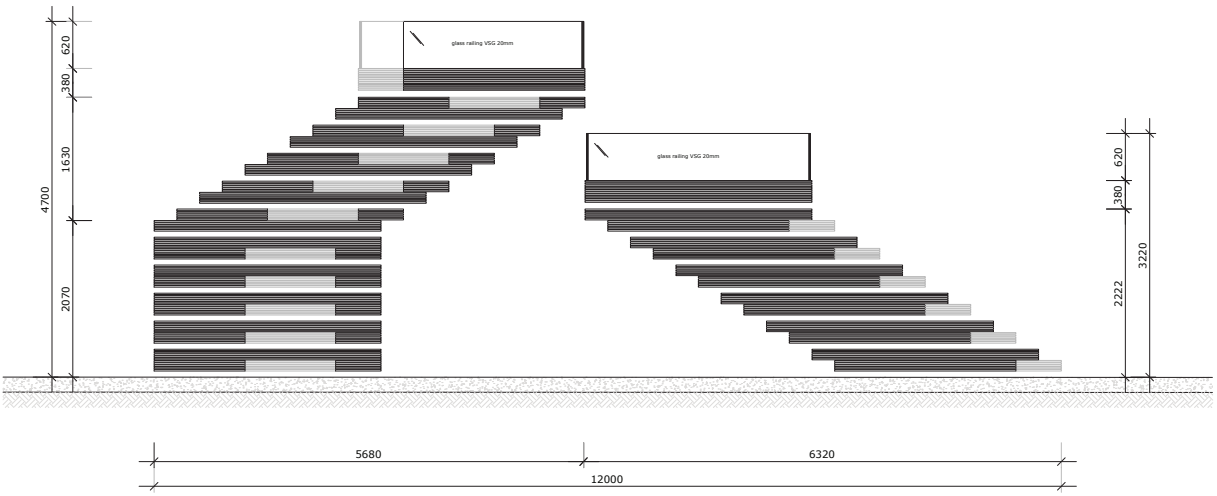
LEVEL 0

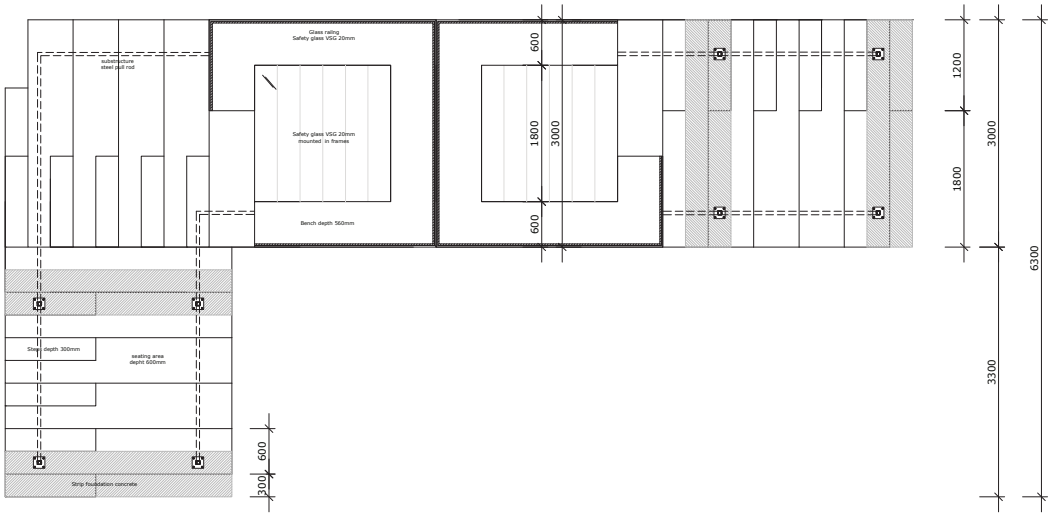
Car park
Street
Access

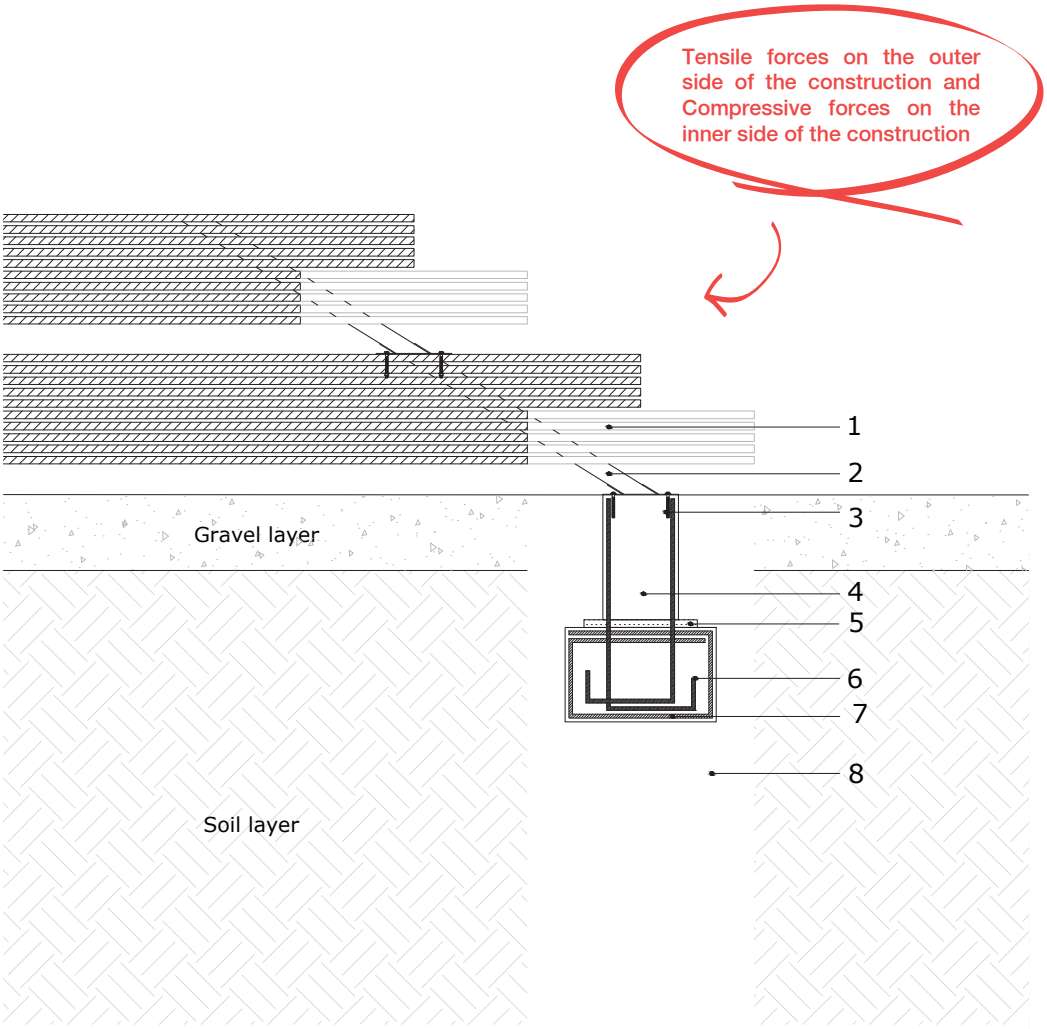
Side and Front view M 1.20



Visualisation


glass railing VSG 20mm
glass railing VSG 20mm
620
380
1630
2070
4700
620
380
3220
2222
5680
6320
12000


substructure
steel quill rod
Glass railing
Safety glass VSG 20mm
Safety glass VSG 20mm
mounted in frames
Bench depth 560mm
600
1800
3000
600
1200
1800
3000
6300
3300
Step depth 300mm
seating area
depht 600mm
600
300
Strip foundation concrete

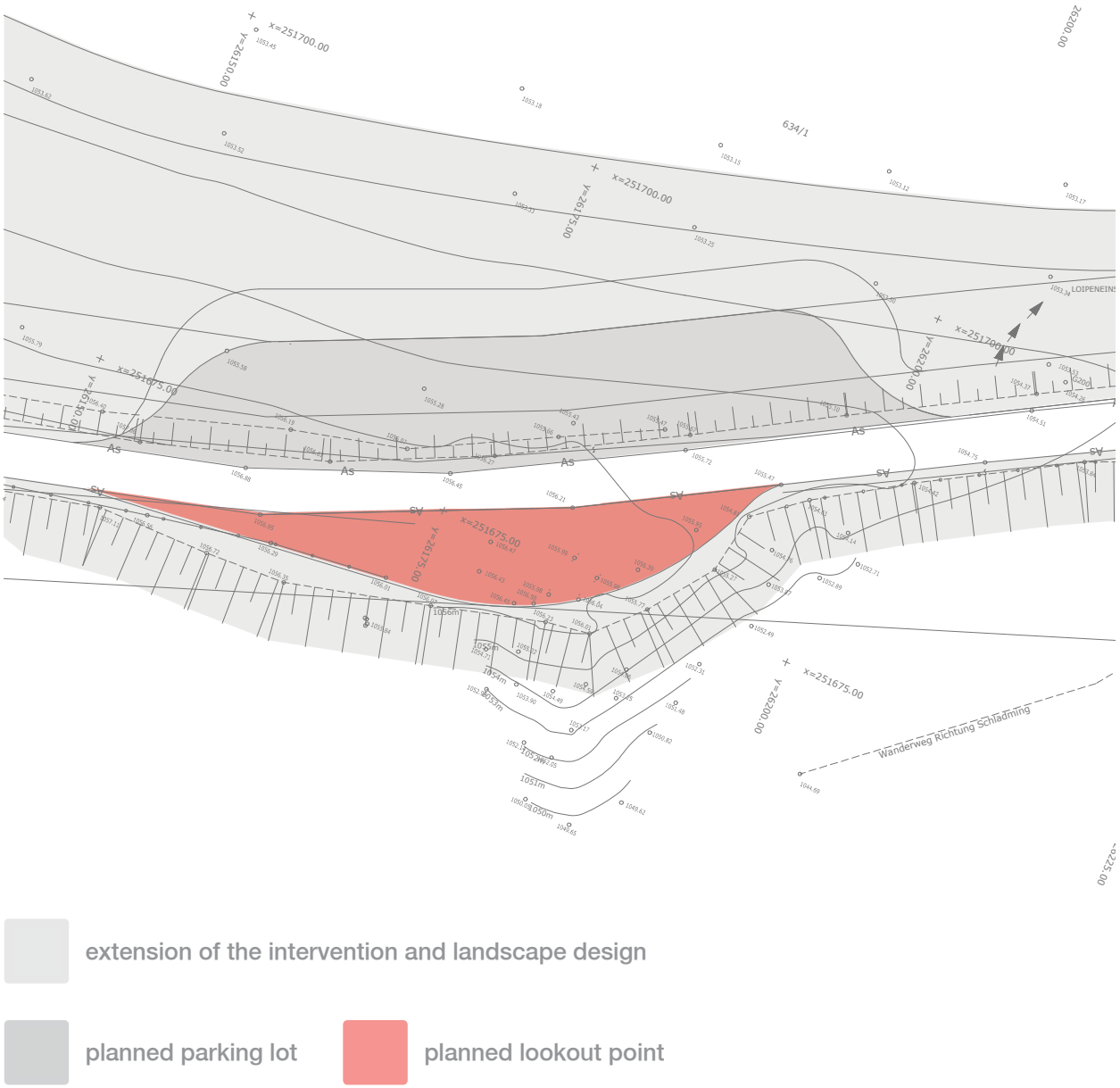


1 Larch boards 20mm
2 Steel pull rod Ø 46mm
3 Composite profile - Steel mounting plate STF1050 150x150mm
Threated screw Ø 8mm
4 Filling with slightly moist stamped concrete
5 Mortar compensating layer 50mm
6 Anchor rod - Reinforcing bar 10mm
7 Welded wire mash Q188
8 Strip foundation concrete 120mm to avoid frost heave and to suit soil conditions

4.4 EXPECTATION AND CONCLUSION

During the study, professionals and non-professionals showed interest in the concept of implementing an architectural intervention in Ramsau am Dachstein. In order to realize the intervention, the next steps would contain the development of a proper project plan including the consideration of potential problems and barriers.

This involves firstly defining the project team and project manager, who will be responsible for executing the project. Improving, adapting and changing the design according to feedback would be carried out together by those responisble.



extension of the intervention and landscape design

planned parking lot

planned lookout point

Figure 8 I Future plan

Detailed planning will increase the chances of a successful implementation and a possibility for an extension in the future (Figure 8: Future plan). In addition, fund-raising by approaching potential spomsors is the most essential step. However, dealing with institutes and companies is only possible by presenting the project in a serious, detailed and reliable way. (Figure 9: Benefits for tourists and locals)

In conclusion, even though the developing process will be challenging, the final out-come will be an excellent and innovative contribution to the field of tourism and a trigger towards collaborative thinking. Outlining the place with design should only be the beginning for the development of various tourist offers, where areas rich in history and nature are connected.

Figure 9 | Benefits for tourists and locals (among others)

5. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The town itself
gave the intervention
its appearance. [...]
It is their identity,
that characterizes
the design [...]
and continues to
shape the cultural
landscape.

This final part of the study reviews the approach used in the study and summarizes the results. The study relied upon a literature review that focused on topics related to tourism and architectural interventions. This framework emphasized definitions and knowledge foundation by firstly introducing architectural interventions and naming existing examples. Secondly, by describing the meaning of Alpine tourism as well as the role of users, the importance of collaboration and knowledge exchange between tourism and design were investigated. However, the complexity of tourism became evident throughout the entire study. The paper examined aspects and considerations in terms of tourism practices and illustrated the influence on design and other concerns of designer´s interest. Finally, the paper defined the design concept based on the information gained throughout the research. Additionally, the study presented a case describing the integration of an architectural intervention in Ramsau am Dachstein.

The research for the case study primarily involved qualitative methods attempting to discern the meaning and use of the place. This required visual and participatory observation as well as interviews, which were conducted during summer 2014. Six interviews representing different stakeholders in the field of tourism and design, were organized. Further interviews with tourists and locals where held during the entire creation process. The respondents described the process of implementing an intervention as challenging and confirmed that it must fulfill regional requirements. Furthermore it was stated that the most demanding challenges in design creation will be to find a balance between the expectations of tourists, locals as well as business-oriented professionals. Thus, the results merged into a proposal for a solution that addresses tourism-, design- and non-professionals alike.

However, as a conclusion of the study, one can state that especially in tourism, the list of requirements for implementing design is endless and influences designers decision in many ways. Nevertheless, it also provides an opportunity to develop solutions in a more collaborative as well as user-oriented way by focusing on the local identity and their notable cultural heritage. The study was driven by a vision of an ideal implementation, where people experience the tourist staged architecture, while connecting Ramsau am Dachstein as a place for a sustainable way of life as well as a place with a great potential to grow.
Even though the study investigated a small aspect on the distinction between design and environment, I am pleased to contribute a statement to the ongoing discussion about the integration of contemporary interventions, their meaning, as well as the potential for designers that the tourism can offer. I am encouraged to see that such design has the ability to enhance user experiences and the tourism in places, such as Ramsau am Dachstein, by implementing meaning and value.

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7. LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND FIGURES

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND FIGURES

Picture 1 | Observer Lighthouse
http://www.wild-danube-delta.com/sulina-observer-lighthouse

Picture 2 | Bruno Möhring, Bismarckturm, Burg i. Spreewald 1017
http://www.zeno.org/Ansichtskarten/M/Burg+i.+Spreewald,+Brandenburg/Bismarck-turm

Picture 3 | Carl Schäfer, Kaiser Wilhelm Turm Spiegelslust, Marburg 1890
http://www.myheimat.de/marburg/freizeit/kaiser-wilhelm-turm-a-spiegelslust-b-marburg-m334185,65642.html

Picture 4 | Robert Rittmeyer, Denkmal für die Schlacht bei Morgarten 1908
http://www.ak-ansichtskarten.de/ak/93-Alte-Ansichtskarte/30320-Stadt-Morgarten/3774848-AK-Morgarten-Denkmal-der-Schlacht-1315

Picture 5 | Belvedere, Landschaftspark Spiegelsberge, Halberstadt 1782
http://www.hotel-zentrale.de/fotos-635-4439-zoom-Halberstadt++-+Belvedere-Halberstadtjpg

Picture 6 | Leon Battista Alberti, De picture 1435
http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0104-59702006000500010

Picture 7 | Aussichtsturm zum weißen Stein, Dossenheim 1906
http://www.odenwaldklub-heidelberg.de/turm.html

Picture 8 | Aussichtsturm Löbauer Berg 1854
http://www.v-like-vintage.net/de/foto_details/205877_foto_Auf+dem+Loebauer+Berg+Der/

Picture 9 | Atomium in Brussels
http://www.bruessel-gui.de/bruessel/atomium.html

Picture 10 | Space Needle in Seattle
http://scelnews.com/2012/02/famous-spots-in-seattle/image01/

Picture 11 | Eiffel Tower in Paris
http://www.toureiffel.paris/en/pictures.html

Picture 12 | Orbit in London
http://www.visitlondon.com/de/sehen-und-erleben/ort/25477436-arcelormittal-orbit

Picture 13| Forest Tower in Putten
http://en.nai.nl/platform/innovation_agenda/item/_pid/kolom2-1/_rp_kolom2-1_elementId/1_688268

Picture 14 | Observation Tower in Graz & double spiral staircase, Graz Castle 1500
http://www.architonic.com/aisht/murturm-nature-observation-tower-terrainloenhart-mayr/5100599

Picture 15| Sunday excursion in the countryside 1900
http://www.lwl.org/pressemitteilungen/daten/bilder/39206.jpg

Picture 16 | Treetop Walkway
http://www.dezeen.com/2008/05/27/kew-tree-top-walkway-by-marks-barfield-architects/

Picture 17 | London Eye in London
http://vidaedu.com/estagios-vidaedu/experiencias-profissionais-remuneradas/reino-unido/

Picture 18 | Orbit in London
http://www.visitlondon.com/de/sehen-und-erleben/ort/25477436-arcelormittal-orbit

Picture 19 | Tiger and Turtle in Duisburg
http://tigerandturtle.duisburg.de/

Picture 20 | Haus-Rucker Co., Rahmenbau, Kassel 1977
http://welt-der-form.net/Kassel/Haus-Rucker-Co-1977-Rahmenbau-07.html

Picture 21 | Il Spir in Switzerland
http://www.myswitzerland.com/de-at/aussichtsplattform-il-spir.html

Picture 22 | Grand Canyon Skywalk in Arizona
http://www.pixmule.com/grand-canyon-sky-walk/14/

Picture 23 | Top of Tyrol in Tyrol
http://www.aste-weissteiner.com/referenzen/top-of-tyrol/#

Picture 24 | Gucker in Italy
http://www.trauttmansdorff.it/besuch-planen/trauttmansdorff-fuer/presse/erlebniswelt-garten.html?sword_list%5B0%5D=Zeitgetriebe

Picture 25 | AlpspiX in Germany
http://www.panoramio.com/photo/78655370

Picture 26 | Glacier Sky Walk in Jasper National Park
http://designdiffusion.com/en/architecture-eng/a-walkway-in-the-sky-of-canada/

Picture 27 | Metropol Parasol in Seville
http://www.yatzer.com/Metropol-Parasol-The-World-s-Largest-Wooden-Structure-J-MAYER-H-Architects

Picture 28 | Phoenix Observation Tower
http://www.novawestventures.com/phoenix-tower/

Picture 29 | High Line in New York
http://www.archdaily.com/24362/the-new-york-high-line-officially-open/1121250496_dsr-highline-09-06-5054/

Picture 30 | Ruta del Peregino in Mexico
http://www.dezeen.com/2011/05/31/ruta-del-peregrino-lookout-point-by-hhf-architects-2/

Picture 31 | Trollstigen in Norway
http://www.reiulframstadarchitects.com/trollstigen-visitor-centre/rra_trollstigen_platform-20diephotodesignerjpg

Picture 32 | Aurland Lookout in Norway
http://www.saunders.no/work/item/98-aurland-lookout

Picture 33 | Wild Reindeer Observation Pavillion in Norway
http://www.dezeen.com/2011/11/01/norwegian-wild-reindeer-centre-pavilion-by-snohetta/

Picture 34 | Timmelsjoch Experience in Austria
http://www.timmelsjoch.com/de/content/10019.aspx

Picture 35 |Climbing
http://www.pinterest.com/pin/303359724872727456/

Picture 36 | ski jump, cross country skiing & skiing
http://morez1900.net/CPA/Sport.htm
http://www.alsap.org/DryCreek/DryCreek.htm
Tourismusverband Ramsau am Dachstein

Picture 37 | Postcard from 1916, Ramsau am Dachstein
Tourismusverband Ramsau am Dachstein

Picture 38 | Photography in 2014, Ramsau am Dachstein
Tourismusverband Ramsau am Dachstein

Picture 39 |The construction of the Protestant Church 1895, Ramsau am Dachstein

Picture 40 | Friedrich Simony, Das Dachsteingebiet 1895
http://www.geographie.hu-berlin.de/abteilungen/zentrale_dienste/geodaten/kartensammlung/LSFotos/BFLHTML/BFL22530154
http://www.gosaunet.at/tipps/wasser-berge-schnee/gletscherberichte/gletscherbericht-2006.html
http://www.anisa.at/Gletscherzustandsbericht_2007.htm

Picture 41 | Summer festival at the Kulmwirt (oldest restaurant in town) 1926 & locals riding their first bike in 1928, Ramsau am Dachstein
Tourismusverband Ramsau am Dachstein

Picture 42 | Summer Sport Activites, Ramsau am Dachstein
Tourismusverband Ramsau am Dachstein

Picture 43 | Winter Sport Activites & Promotional poster, Ramsau am Dachstein
Tourismusverband Ramsau am Dachstein

Picture 44 | Construction of the cable car in 1969, Ramsau am Dachstein
Tourismusverband Ramsau am Dachstein

Picture 45 | Sky Walk, Dachstein
Tourismusverband Ramsau am Dachstein

Picture 46 | Ice palace, Dachstein
Tourismusverband Ramsau am Dachstein

Picture 47 | Suspension bridge, Dachstein
Tourismusverband Ramsau am Dachstein

Picture 48 | Farmers in 1903
Tourismusverband Ramsau am Dachstein

Picture 49 | Observational and visual research

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND FIGURES

Figure 1 | Main reasons for travelling to the selected destination in Austria

Figure 2 | Map Ramsau am Dachstein

Figure 3 | Access and connections around the site

Figure 4 | Points of Interest

Figure 5 | Illustration how mountains are created

Figure 6 | Possible configurations

Figure 7 | CLT panel as repeating structure

Figure 8 | Future plan

Figure 9 | Benefits for tourists and locals